Religion

Department of Philosophy and Religion

REL 101. Religions of the World. 3 credits.
An investigation of the world's major religions which will give attention to their origin, history, mythology and doctrines.

REL/HEBR 131-132. Elementary Biblical Hebrew. 4 credits each semester.
An introductory course for students who intend to acquire the ability to read the Massoretic text of the Bible. Systematic study of the fundamentals of grammar with emphasis on reading, pronunciation and translation.

REL 200. Exploring Religion. 3 credits.
An examination of the various components in the study of religion including myths, rituals, mystical experiences, theologies, ethics and current issues. Examples will be taken from the sacred texts, rituals and the lives of religious personalities in traditions around the world.

REL 201. Introduction to Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. 3 credits.
A study of selected texts from the books of Genesis-Malachi that will examine their literary, historical and theological dimensions from the perspective of their ancient Israelite and Judahite contexts.

REL 202. Jesus and the Beginnings of Christianity. 3 credits.
This course discusses the literature of the New Testament in light of the historical, social and religious conditions from which it emerged. Particular attention is given to historical issues related to Jesus and the origins of Christianity.

REL 210. Religion in America. 3 credits.
The purpose of this course is to offer students the opportunity to explore the broad contours of the intersection of religion with other important facets of American society, such as politics and law, civic space and social activism, social identities, intellectual life, and the arts and media. It will consider the relationship of religion to the constructing of an American identity rooted in ideas of pluralism, tolerance, equality, freedom of conscience, democracy, and secularism.

REL/PHIL 218. Philosophy of Religion. 3 credits.
An intensive examination of religion from the standpoint of philosophical thinking with particular emphasis on the way philosophers view such problems as the existence of God, evil, immortality, religious language, etc.

REL/HEBR 231-232. Intermediate Biblical Hebrew. 3 credits each semester.
An intensive reading course. Selections from the Massoretic text of the Bible. An introduction to the critical apparatus used within the Massoretic text, as well as the variant reading apparatus printed in the Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia. Prerequisite: One year of college biblical Hebrew or equivalent.

REL 240. Jesus and the Moral Life. 3 credits.
An introductory course that focuses on the ways in which the moral teachings of Jesus of Nazareth, explored from both historical and multi-cultural perspectives, informed and continues to inform personal ideals and moral visions of society.

REL 270. Religious Ethics. 3 credits.
An investigation of the historical development of religious values and moral concepts in the Western religious traditions of Judaism, Roman Catholicism and Protestantism.

REL 280. Religion and Science. 3 credits.
This course will provide a historical survey of the relationship between religion and the sciences; offer overviews of scientific and theological theory; examine the development of theory formation; focus on issues in astronomy, physics and biology; explore the ethical implications of scientific and religious theories; and trace developments.

REL 300. Selected Topics in Religion. 3 credits.
Selected topics in religion are studied in depth. See MyMadison for current topic. Course may be repeated for credit when content changes.

REL 303. Lived Religion: Ritual Practice/Ethnographic Methods. 3 credits.
Ethnography constitutes one of the most formative methods in the study of religion. This course gives students a foundation in understanding how ethnographic studies of religion augment text-based religious studies with a focus on lived religion. Students explore the cultural dimension of religious practice and develop practical skills through both reading and field work in local religious communities.

REL 305. Islamic Religious Traditions. 3 credits.
This course introduces the Islamic religious tradition from its inception to the present. Topics covered include the message and style of the Qur’an, the life and experience of Muhammad, the major beliefs and practices of Islam, and the theological, philosophical and mystical movements in the Islamic empire. Attention is also given to modern Islamic movements and their relation to the modern world inside and outside the Middle East.

REL 306. Women and Gender in Islam. 3 credits.
This course investigates how particular gender roles, identities, and relationships become signified as Islamic, and the ways in which Muslim women continually re-negotiate the boundaries of gender in living an authentic religious life. Topics will include Qur’anic revelations, the formation of Islamic jurisprudence, sexual ethics, representations of Muslim women in colonial discourse, as well as the role of women in ritual practice and feminist movements.

REL 308. Islam in South Asia. 3 credits.
This course examines the history and practice of Islam in South Asia. We will look at the historical origins, textual sources, ritual practices and cultural diversity of Islam in light of this distinct regional context. Topics will include Sufism, literary expression, popular devotion, modern social movements, sectarian and cross-communal relations, and religious violence.

REL 310. Hindu Traditions. 3 credits.
This course examines the notions of world, community and self as experienced and interpreted by Hindus; the basic assumptions underlying their world view; how these assumptions interrelate with the various dimensions of Hindu physical, psychological and cultural experience; how they are expressed in myth, ritual and social structures; and the tensions we find between the ideal and the real.

REL 312. Religions of East Asia. 3 credits.
An introduction to the religions of China and Japan, including Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, Shinto, folk religions and the “New Religions” of Japan. Attention to the role of religion in the family and the state, classic texts, the importance of nature and expressions of spirituality in the fine arts.

REL 313. Hindu Ethics. 3 credits.
This course is an introduction to Hindu modes of moral reasoning. It gives special attention to the concept of moral order and its relationship to the pursuit of pleasure and of wealth, on the one hand, and the quest for liberation, on the other hand. Attention is paid to common moral obligations as well as to specified, and sometimes gendered, vocational duties incumbent upon Hindus.

REL 314. Gandhi. 3 credits.
Gandhi is unique as a social theorist, a philosopher and an activist. He challenged the dominant world structure of his time and struggled with some of the most significant issues of our time: violence, racism, oppression of women, role of religion, nature of capitalism and conflict between ethnic and religious communities. This course examines his theory and praxis on these and other issues.

REL 315. Women and Religion. 3 credits.
Study of women and world religions, historically and today, emphasizing Buddhism, religions of China and Japan, Judaism and Christianity. The variety of women’s religious roles and practices are studied in a comparative context. Feminist scholarship’s proposals for revising our understanding of religious history and reforming religious traditions.

REL 316. Topics in Hinduism. 3 credits.
Study of selected topics in Hinduism. May be repeated for credit when course content changes.

REL 320. Judaism. 3 credits.
An examination of the beliefs, practices and historical development of the various forms of Judaism represented in America today: Orthodox, Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist.

REL/SOCI 322. Sociology of Religion. 3 credits.
A sociological analysis of religion; how it influences and is influenced by social existence. See cross listing in Department of Sociology and Anthropology.

REL 325. Catholicism in the Modern World. 3 credits.
Study of the variety of responses by contemporary Catholic theologians and philosophers to key elements in Christian doctrine and practice. Topics include Vatican II, scripture, tradition and modern scholarship; Jesus and Christology; contemporary Catholic spirituality; moral issues in the church; and ecumenism.

http://www.jmu.edu/catalog/14
REL 330. Religions of Africa and the African Diaspora. 3 credits. An examination of the character of religious traditions, beliefs and liturgical practices of African and African-Diaspora communities. Both primary (historical and anthropological) and secondary sources are examined.

REL 332. Born Again Religion. 3 credits. Evangelical Protestantism has played a vital role in shaping American religious history. The religious and social allegiances of evangelicalism are quite diverse, however. Evangelicals also maintain a paradoxical relationship with American society, functioning both as powerful insiders and vocal outsiders. This course is designed to introduce students to the history of evangelicalism, its religious patterns and its negotiations with contemporary American culture.

REL 334. New Religious Movements. 3 credits. America has proven to be fertile soil for the development of new religious traditions. It has encouraged religious pluralism, and has allowed hundreds of new communities to establish themselves as important elements of society. This course will consider some of the representative new religions in America by examining their histories, beliefs and practices.

REL 336. African-American Religion. 3 credits. The purpose of this course is to familiarize the student with the broad contours of the African-American religious experience, and its history, practices, and communities by examining the intersection of race and religion in America. Through the close reading of primary texts and increased familiarity with significant scholarly literature, students will gain a basic understanding of the fundamental categories in African-American religion.

REL 340. Introduction to Christianity. 3 credits. This course is designed to provide a broad survey of the Christian tradition, from its origins to its contemporary expressions. In addition to its historical development, the course will consider Christian belief, ritual, moral practice, and societal engagement. Major intellectual and theological traditions will be addressed through the study of foundational texts. Students will gain a working knowledge of major church communions as well as minor and marginalized movements.

REL 341. Early Christian Gospels: Origins, History, and Conflict. 3 credits. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are the familiar “canonical” gospels. In the early centuries of Christianity other gospels circulated: the Gospel of Peter, “Q,” Infancy Gospels and the so-called Gnostic gospels. This course examines the origins of the canonical and non-canonical gospels, the historical and theological factors at work in the emergence of the canonical gospels to a position of primacy, and the struggles within early Christianity to define its authoritative tradition.

REL 342. The Historical Jesus and the Roman Imperial World. 3 credits. A study of the historical Jesus and the Jesus-movement as a response to Roman power, domination and violence. Includes discussion of historiographical problems raised in past and present scholarly “quests” for the historical Jesus.

REL 343. Paul and the Origins of Christianity. 3 credits. Some scholars argue that the Apostle Paul was the “real” founder of Christianity, others that he was the faithful interpreter of the Jesus traditions to the Greco-Roman world. After reconstructing the historical course of Paul’s life and journeys from the available sources, the course will analyze selected Pauline epistles, sent to early Christian communities, in order to reconstruct his teaching and ethics and to assess his significance for the origins of Christianity.

REL 348. Christianity in Global Context. 3 credits. Christianity plays a vital role in many societies around the world. Though often treated as a mostly western or European religion, it was in fact a global religion first and foremost. This course examines Christianity from that global perspective. What does Christianity look like around the world? How have indigenous cultures fashioned their own versions of Christianity in the modern world? Is there unity in the diversity of these global Christians?

REL 350. Islamic Law and Society. 3 credits. This course aims to introduce students to the study of Islamic law, the all-embracing sacred law of Islam. In this course we will consider various facets of the historical, doctrinal, institutional and social complexity of Islamic law in the classical and modern periods. Topics to be discussed include medieval Islamic legal theory, gender and sexuality, the just war, and the issue of Islamic law and universal human rights, particularly as they pertain to women.

REL 360. History of Christian Thought. 3 credits. A survey of the development of Christian thought with primary emphasis on the peoples, ideas and historical events around which the developments took place. Thus, material from Christian origins through to the present will be examined in their historical contexts.

REL/HIST 362. Introduction to U.S. Religious History. 3 credits. The course introduces the religious history of the colonies and the United States, from native traditions through the 20th century. We examine the historical/social impact of groups ranging from Roman Catholic migrants to evangelical Protestants and Scientologists. Special attention is paid to the extraordinary and persistent levels of religious diversity and adherence throughout U.S. history.

REL/IA 363. Apocalypticism, Religious Terrorism and Peace. 3 credits. This course traces apocalypticism from its ancient Jewish and Christian roots to its contemporary manifestations in religious groups around the world. Since apocalypticism is a worldview that cuts across religious traditions, the course covers a variety of religious groups. The last half of the course focuses on the complex relationships between apocalyptic thinking and religious terrorism, and entails an independent research project.

REL 370. Mysticism. 3 credits. An examination of the nature of mysticism and its forms of practice in selected religious communities throughout the world.

REL/PHIL 375. The 19th Century: Age of Ideology. 3 credits. A study of selected 19th century philosophers and theologians with special attention to rationalism, romanticism and idealism. Views of Hegel, Schleiermacher, Ritschl, Marx and others are considered.

REL/PHIL 377. Hermeneutics. 3 credits. This course will examine the main features of hermeneutics with particular emphasis on its contemporary perspectives. Discussion will focus on such themes as human understanding and human finitude, the nature of history and tradition, linguisticity and textuality of experience. Readings may address Gadamer, Ricoeur, Schleiermacher and Dilthey. Prerequisite: PHIL 101 or permission of the instructor.

REL 380. Contemporary Theologies. 3 credits. A survey of one or more of the following contemporary theological movements: continental, North American, African and South American, including Roman Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant approaches, and entail an independent research project.

REL/HIST 385. Buddhist Thought. 3 credits. Study of major issues and thinkers in the Buddhist tradition from ancient times to the present. May be repeated for credit when course content changes.

REL 386. Topics in Buddhist Studies. 3 credits. Study of major issues and thinkers in the Buddhist tradition from ancient times to the present. May be repeated for credit when course content changes. Prerequisite: PHIL 385 or REL 385.

REL 410. Dharma/Adharma: Morality and Ethics in Hindu Society. 3 credits. What values are advanced in Hindu religious and ethical teachings? How do Hindu texts and traditions define and teach the good life and moral responsibility considered by caste, class, gender or socioeconomic factors? These are some of the questions that will be considered in this study on Hindu modes of moral reasoning. It will give special attention to the concept of moral order (dharma) and try to make sense of chaos (adharma).

REL 440. Topics in Religion in America. 3 credits. This course serves as a senior seminar (capstone) for majors in Religion, centered around the subject of Religion in America. As a capstone course, students will pursue their own advanced research projects after an initial, intensive introduction to the subject. Rotating topics include "Mormonism and American Culture" and "American Evangelicalism," as well as others.

REL 450. Religion and Society. 3 credits. A survey and/or selection of major Western approaches to issues of religion and society, including but not limited to, traditional understanding of church and state issues. Significant figures, texts and methodologies will be critically examined. Fulfills the College of Arts and Letters writing-intensive requirement for the major. Prerequisite: One of the following: REL 240, REL 270, REL 360, REL 380 or permission of the instructor.

REL 460. Topics in Ancient Jewish and Early Christian Literature. 3 credits. An in-depth examination, using critical academic methods, of the historical, literary and cultural dimensions of selected texts from the literatures of Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity. Fulfills the College of Arts and Letters writing-intensive requirement for the major. Prerequisite: REL 291, REL 292 or permission of the instructor.
REL 475. Inter-Religious Dialogue. 3 credits.
Dialogue is, today, the most important response of the world’s religions to the diversity of world religions. It is a vehicle for mutual understanding, mutual challenge and joint response to contemporary problems. Students will study the theory and practice of dialogue and then engage in dialogue. Fulfills the College of Arts and Letters writing-intensive requirement for the major. Prerequisite: Familiarity with two world religions or permission of the instructor.

REL 490. Special Studies in Religion. 3 credits.
Designed to give capable students an opportunity to complete an independent study in religion under faculty supervision. Prerequisite: Permission of the department head.

REL 493. Religion Course Assistantship. 3 credits.
Students participate as course assistants in religion. Assistantships provide students with a sense of what it is like to teach a religion course by allowing them to work closely with faculty members through different phases of course preparation, presentation and evaluation. Assistantships may also provide opportunities for student assistants to lead discussion and to help their peers review the material outside the classroom. Prerequisite: Senior status or permission of the department head.

REL 495. Religion Internship. 3 credits.
Gives the structured opportunity to gain practical knowledge and experience while serving the community. Prerequisites: Philosophy and Religion Major or Minor (Religious Concentration), and junior or senior standing. REL 499. Honors. 6 credits.
Year course.

Russian

Department of Foreign Languages, Literature and Cultures

RUS 101. Elementary Russian I (4, 1). 3-4 credits.
The fundamentals of Russian through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Practice in pronunciation and development of comprehension. One hour’s work a week in the language laboratory. If student has had two or more years of the language in high school he/she will not receive credit for the course.

RUS 102. Elementary Russian II (4, 1). 3-4 credits.
The fundamentals of Russian through listening, speaking, reading and writing. Practice in pronunciation and development of comprehension. One hour’s work a week in the language laboratory. If student has had two or more years of the language in high school he/she will not receive credit for the course. Prerequisite: RUS 101.

RUS 111. Intensive Russian I (6, 1). 6 credits.
The fundamentals of Russian through listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four-week course is the equivalent of RUS 101-102.

RUS 212. Intensive Russian II (6, 1). 6 credits.
The fundamentals of Russian through listening, speaking, reading and writing. The four-week course is the equivalent of RUS 213-232. Prerequisite: RUS 102 or RUS 111 or sufficient score on the Foreign Language Placement Exam.

RUS 231. Intermediate Russian I. 3 credits.
A thorough review of grammar, vocabulary building, conversation, composition and reading. Prerequisite: RUS 102 or RUS 111 or sufficient score on the Foreign Language Placement Exam.

RUS 232. Intermediate Russian II. 3 credits.
A thorough review of grammar, vocabulary building, conversation, composition and reading. Prerequisite: RUS 231 or sufficient score on the Foreign Language Placement Exam.

RUS 255-256. Russian Literature in Translation, 3 credits each semester. First semester: Russian literature to 1880; second semester: 1880 to the present. All lectures and readings are in English.

RUS 300. Grammar and Communication, 3 credits.
Intensive training in grammatical structures and their application to oral and written communication. Instruction is in Russian. Fulfills the College of Arts and Letters writing-intensive requirement for the major. Prerequisite: RUS 212 or RUS 232 or sufficient score on the Foreign Language Placement Exam.

RUS 308. Introduction to Russian Civilization, 3 credits.
A study of Russian life and culture and the outstanding contributions of Russian-speaking people. Instruction is in English. Prerequisite: RUS 300.

RUS 315. Russian Phonetics, 3 credits.
Intensive drill in Russian sounds and intonation patterns. Continued emphasis on conversation. Instruction is in Russian. Prerequisite: RUS 222 or equivalent.

RUS 320. Russian Oral and Written Communication, 3 credits.
Intensive training in the use of modern, everyday Russian with emphasis on conversation and composition. Readings in Russian will provide a context for discussion and writing. Prerequisite: RUS 300.

RUS 400. Advanced Conversation. 3 credits.
Discussions deal with topics of current interest. Instruction is in Russian. Prerequisite: RUS 300 or equivalent.

RUS 405. Russian Literature of the 19th Century, 3 credits.
A study of the works of major Russian writers of the 19th century. Instruction is in Russian. Prerequisite: RUS 300 or permission of the instructor.

RUS 466. Russian Literature of the 20th Century, 3 credits.
A study of selected works of Russian literature. Instruction is in English. May be repeated for credit when course content changes.

Social Work

Department of Social Work

SOWK 287. Introduction to Social Work, 3 credits.
Overview of social work as a profession with emphasis on various settings and diverse populations as distinguished by age, class, race, ethnicity, culture, spirituality, family structure, marital status, gender, gender identity, sex, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socio-economic status, and national origin and the implications to social work practice. Focuses on practical experiences designed to enable students to gain familiarity with the dynamics of the profession. Corequisite: 20 hours community service-learning.

Introduces students to the history of social work and to a range of social welfare policies and issues. Focuses on socio-economic realities across diverse segments of U.S. society within a global context. Explores professional, societal and personal values in the development of responses to human needs.

SOWK 301. Workshops in Social Work, 0-3 credits. Credit/no credit; Non-graded; Offered on a rotating basis.
Detailed study of a topic of interest in social work. May be repeated for credit.

SOWK 302. Workshops in Social Work, 1-3 credits. Offered on a rotating basis.
Detailed study of a topic of interest in social work. May be repeated for credit.

SOWK 305. Social Work Research Methods, 3 credits.
Study of qualitative and quantitative methods in social work research. Demonstrating scientific and ethical research processes including formulation of research questions, selecting a design, collecting data, analysis and interpretation of data, and exposure to evaluation of practice. Diversity and inclusion are highlighted in the research process. Prerequisites: MATH 220 or SOCI 231, SOWK 287, SOWK 288.

SOWK/HTH/HHS/NSG 314. Rural Health: An Interdisciplinary Approach, 3 credits.
Students study, observe and participate in interdisciplinary assessment, planning and delivery of community-based primary health care in partnership with residents and agencies of a host rural county. Learning activities will emphasize rural culture, rural health care and interdisciplinary practice.

SOWK 317. Skills for Generalist Social Work, 3 credits.
Developing self-awareness of students’ own value and culture systems, differentiating between their own systems and those of clients, and how these differences impact on communication. Understanding of empathy, engagement and other interpersonal skills. Developing skills in communication and interviewing within a strengths-based generalist framework with individuals, families, groups and communities. Prerequisite: SOWK 287, SOWK 288 or departmental permission.

SOWK 320. Human Behavior in the Social Environment, 3 credits.
Integrates and expands prerequisite knowledge in biological, psychological, and socio-cultural sciences to assessment of individuals, groups, families, organizations, and communities in a pluralistic society. Application and critique of theoretical frameworks related to impact of race, age, gender,