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. May be used for general education credit.

REL 102. God, Meaning and Morality. 3 credits.
A study of the ways in which various communities perceive and understand the basis of knowledge, reality, meaning and purpose, ethics, and aesthetics. Students will explore religious and nonreligious approaches to these issues.

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 Judean 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 renegotiate 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 309. Jihad in Islamic Traditions. 3 credits.
This course examines jihad as it is debated and sanctioned throughout Islamic history. Jihad means ‘struggle’ and we will look at how that encompasses both violent, militaristic conflict and also the inner, spiritual struggle of an individual to follow God.
We will trace how Muslims have interpreted this dual tradition in diverse historical and cultural contexts.

**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 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.

**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 333. The Other Bibles: Dead Sea Scrolls, Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha. 3 credits.
This course will familiarize students with a broad range of early Jewish and Christian writings, found outside of the Jewish and Protestant Christian canon, that were held to be Scripture at the time of their production and reception ca. 300 B.C.E. - 200 C.E. Using a broad range of interdisciplinary methodologies drawn from biblical studies, students will study these Scriptures in the context of late Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman cultures, as well as in light of archaeological findings.

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.

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 Quest. 3 credits.
A study of the attempts of scholarship since the Enlightenment to discover the so-called historical Jesus. Includes discussion of historiographical problems raised in past and present scholarly “quests” for the historical Jesus, analysis of the relationship between memory and the Jesus tradition, and practice in situating the Gospel materials in the social and political context of ancient Roman Palestine. Prerequisite: REL 202.

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 Christianities?

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 through 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, linguisticality 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 covering themes such as the conflict between history and faith, Christology, fundamentalism and liberalism, and the emergence of liberation, feminist, black, neo-conservative, secular, pluralist and ecological theologies.

**REL/PHIL 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: Hindu Ethical Reasoning. 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 other 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 201, REL 202 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 (Religion Concentration), and junior or senior standing.

**REL 499. Honors.** 6 credits.
Year course.

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