

Religion (BA, Minor) Course Descriptions

RLGN 1001/3101 Hebrew Bible/Old Testament Survey (3 units)

A survey of the origins and development of the Hebrew Bible/Christian Old Testament with attention to its theological and literary importance for the Western mind.

RLGN 1002 Introduction to Biblical Hebrew (1 unit)

A study of the Biblical Hebrew.

RLGN 1010/3110 Christianity & Contemporary Film (3 units)

Investigation of contemporary feature films which deal substantially with Christian themes.

RLGN 1012/3112 Introduction to Christianity Through Art (3 units)

Reviews Christianity's Biblical foundations and the basic history, teaching, and liturgy of the church and illustrates these by looking at Christian art from various times and places. This course is especially intended for students who have no previous knowledge of Christianity.

RLGN 1018/3118 Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke & Acts of the Apostles (3 units)

A detailed study of these books and of the historical Jesus. We will reconstruct the social setting and major themes of each gospel and examine the life, teaching, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. Some attention will also be paid to the content and message of the Acts of the Apostles.

RLGN 1022/3122 Gospel of Mark (3 units)

Study of the earliest gospel to determine its theological message, its understanding of Christ, miracles and discipleship, and its social relevance.

RLGN 1026/3126 Gospel & Epistles of John (3 units)

Study of major themes of these New Testament books with special attention to Christology and their presentation of the Christian spiritual life.

RLGN 1027/3127 New Testament Survey (3 units)

A survey and introduction to the book that has shaped the Western mind more profoundly than any other for nearly 2000 years.

RLGN 1028/3128 Book of Revelation (3 units)

Examination of the context, message, and contemporary relevance of this extraordinary final book of the Christian New Testament.

RLGN 1030/3130 The Letters of St. Paul (3 units)

A study of the major themes of Paul's thought through the letters he wrote as responses to problems in the early Christian church.

RLGN 1032/3132 Women, Religion and Sexuality (3 units)

A cross-cultural study of the impact of traditional religious teachings about sex on society's perception of women's role and status and on women's own self-perception, with particular attention to the historical origins of female subordination.

RLGN 1042/3142 Catholic Moral Philosophy (3 units)

A critical investigation of Catholic moral reasoning on a range of contemporary ethical issues.

RLGN 1045 Mindful Meditation (1 unit)

Mindful meditation is a simple, powerful technique that reduces stress and promotes well-being. Backed by over 30 years of research, mindfulness develops awareness of thoughts, emotions, and the body. This awareness allows you to identify sources of stress and anxiety before they intensify and become overwhelming. This course will teach you the basic methods of mindfulness as well as help you build your own practice. The course offers weekly mindfulness techniques, periods of group practice, practical ways to apply mindfulness to your everyday life.

RLGN 1052/3152 Contemporary Views of Christ (3 units)

A general introduction to the person of Jesus Christ. Various Christian/Catholic traditions along with contemporary reflections from the third world reveal the rich spectrum of meaning Jesus Christ holds for contemporary Christians.

RLGN 1054/3154 Theology of Women (3 units)

How does a woman evolve a personal spirituality beyond male images and language? Study of both the patriarchal roots of (some) religions and of the womanist revolution in theology will lead this exploration into the question of how we name and relate to the sacred.

RLGN 1055/3155 Passion for Justice: Liberation Theologies & Social Justice (3 units)

Engagement with contemporary efforts to reinterpret Christian theology in the context of social justice projects emerging from and in solidarity with the poor of Latin American, North American feminists, and the African American Christian community. Students will participate in local partnerships focused on the issues of impoverishment. (Service Learning)

RLGN 1058/3158 Catholic Thought in Contemporary World (3 units)

A survey of Catholic intellectual response since the Second Vatican Council to the issues, questions, and concerns of the contemporary world. Topics covered will include: war and peace, social, economic, and environmental justice, ecumenism and collegiality, and sexuality.

RLGN 1059/3159 Prophets, Psalms, and Social Justice (3 units)

Early in human civilization scribes, prophets, psalmists and philosophers determined that the world was not just. Cross culturally and across religious perspective a common language and a series of ethical images and motifs develop to express the human longing for order and justice in daily life. We will explore the common roots of Western religion and ethics around the human urge to improve the lot of the "other." We will study the classical references and texts in the Hebrew Bible including the Torah literature and the multiple voices of the prophets with emphasis upon Amos, Hosea, Micah and Isaiah. We will discuss the implications and applications of these texts to our leaders, our society and to ourselves.

RLGN 1063/3163 Mysticism (3 units)

"Mysticism" refers to the writings produced by those who have claimed a direct experience of God. This course draws from Christian and/or global sources to examine the mystic mind.

RLGN 1070/3170 The Spirituality of the Earth (3 units)

A sustained reflection on the role of religion in the task of developing an ecologically sound relationship to the Earth, and on the degree to which that relationship suggests new possibilities for the human spirit.

RLGN 1075 Religion and Social Theory (3 units)

Working from the classics, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Mead, Parsons and Bellah, we will examine religious consciousness within a general theory of human action. Historical and comparative frameworks will be used to identify the role religious expression and activity has played in society and social organization. We will explore the major themes of secularization, modernization, religion and politics, civil religion, religious movements, rise of fundamentalism, and civility and religion. Examples of contemporary religious activity will be drawn from cross-cultural and cross-national perspectives.

RLGN 1077/3177 Philosophy & Religions of Asia (3 units)

A survey of one or more of the major religious traditions of Asia—Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism—in their historical and cultural contexts, examining how each conceives the nature of reality, the goals of human life, and the way to those goals.

RLGN 1085/3185 Judaism & Christianity in the Graeco-Roman World (3 units)

A study of the evolution of Jewish beliefs and practices from the Babylonian Exile in the 6th century B.C.E. to the emergence of a distinctive Christian identity by the end of the 1st century C.E. Emphasis on primary texts in translation.

RLGN 1086/3186 Catholic Social Teaching (3 units)

A study of the literature of Catholic social teaching and ways in which people of faith have attempted to change the world for the better, involving service learning experiences.

RLGN 1102/3102 Celtic Spirituality (3 units)

Surveys what is known of ancient pre-Christian Celtic religious belief and practice and considers the historical basis for a particularly Celtic Christianity. These include Celtic attitudes towards nature and the feminine, distinctive features of Celtic Christian practice. Equips students with tools to evaluate the enormous body of "Celtic" materials flooding the market today.

RLGN 1175/3175 Philosophy of Religion (3 units)

A rigorous inquiry into topics central to the philosophy of religion including the nature of God, grounds for belief and disbelief, the problem of evil, death and immortality, and the problem of conflicting truth claims in a religiously plural world.

RLGN 1178/3178 The World's Religions (3 units)

A study of humankind's ultimate and enduring questions- the nature of reality and the meaning and end of human life-against the background of its multiform spiritual heritage. The course will survey the world's great religious traditions (Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism), accenting both their commonalities and their distinctiveness.

RLGN 2999 Independent Study (1-3 units)

The privilege of independent study is possible for students who are prepared to undertake it based on student need or interest with approval of the Chair of the department, the instructor concerned, and the Dean of the School. The study must be in an area not covered by a regularly scheduled course. Course may be taken for 1-3 units. The maximum number of units that can be earned in one semester by independent study is 3; a total of up to six units of independent study may be applied to the degree.

RLGN 3001 Dance & Spiritual Expression (3 units)

Drawing on the wisdom of Kimerer LaMothe, Friedrich Nietzsche, and other scholars, philosophers, and dancers, this course demonstrates the power of dance to open human beings to knowledge and experience that we would not otherwise have. In case studies drawn from around the world, we see dancing bodies as instruments of devotion, and as vehicles for traveling through different realms of reality. We see moving bodies as catalysts for spiritual change, and as vessels for religious meaning. We see women and men finding in dance a medium for expressing and becoming their highest ideals. The course is divided into three interrelated sections: "Dance in the World's Religions" – "Dance in the Modern West: Religious Impulses and Aspects" – "Dance, Philosophy, and the Study of Religion."

RLGN 3075 Religion & Social Theory (3 units)

Working from the classics, Durkheim, Marx, Weber, Mead, Parsons and Bellah, we will examine religious consciousness within a general theory of human action. Historical and comparative frameworks will be used to identify the role religious expression and activity has played in society and social organization. We will explore the major themes of secularization, modernization, religion and politics, civil religion, religious movements, rise of fundamentalism, and civility and religion. Examples of contemporary religious activity will be drawn from cross-cultural and cross-national perspectives.

RLGN 3120 The Rhetoric of Belief (3 units)

An investigation of God-language in the speeches and writings of outstanding politicians, novelists, poets, philosophers, and religious activists from around the world, this Honors seminar aims at deepening our skills as communicators, sharpening our capacity for critical analysis, and understanding the complex relationship between language and belief.

RLGN 3160 Meaning & Religion (3 units)

This course, required of all Religion majors and minors, but open to all, serves as an investigation of various approaches to the academic study of religion, from the anthropological and sociological to the philosophical and the theological. While specific methodological approaches to the study of religion may vary from year to year, this course is designed to foster an awareness of the role of religion in humanity's quest for meaning. As such, this course focuses on method and theory, as well as on the capacity of religion to cultivate deeply meaningful human lives.

RLGN 3164 Divine Feminine in Judaism & Christianity (3 units)

Explores role of the Divine Feminine in Judaism and Christianity. Examines historical roots of this theme and how its manifestation in figures such as Asherah, Sophia, Eve, Lilith, Mary, Mary Magdalene, and female saints contributed to, and served as expressions of resistance to patriarchy in, these religions.

RLGN 3166 Woman's Ancient Mysteries (3 units)

In this course, we will remember and reconstruct a time when women in the West held religious authority and participated in public and secret mystery practices that marked some of their major life transitions, from menarche, to marriage and childbirth, to death. We will explore the powerful role of the priestess in ancient Greece, the nature of the various goddesses and their cults, and the meaning women derived from their relationships with both male and female deities. Special emphasis will be given to the most

famous "psychics" of all times — the oracular priestesses at Dodona and Delphi — as well as women's secret rites to Demeter and Persephone and the Eleusinian Mysteries. We will also look at the instructor's groundbreaking research on "divine birth" as a possible real shamanic practice of women in Western antiquity. Finally, we will examine how contemporary women are looking to such ancient women's roles and practices in order to develop and reclaim spiritual leadership.

RLGN 3179 Myth, Symbol and Ritual (3 units)

The phenomenon of religion viewed anthropologically. Religious beliefs in oral traditions and pre-literate cultures; analysis of anthropological theories concerning the evolution and function of religious belief, myth, symbolism, and ritual; relation of religion to culture and social organization.

RLGN 3180 Theory and Practice: Christian Prayer and Meditation (3 units)

A study of various types of prayer within the Christian tradition from verbal prayer to meditative prayer to silence in the presence of God. Alternatives between lectures on the history and theory of each form of prayer and a workshop in which students pray. Prerequisite: one course in religion or philosophy or by permission of the instructor.

RLGN 3187 Understanding Islam (3 units)

An analysis of global Islamic civilization as one of the world's most powerful spiritual and political forces, this course investigates Islam's history, its religious beliefs and practices, and its diverse political values.

RLGN 3712 Religion in American History (3 units)

A chronological survey of the relationship between diverse religious beliefs and their social, economic, and political contexts in the United States, from the 1490's to the 1990's. We explore religion's role in shaping the national experience, and how the national experience has shaped the nature of religious faith.

RLGN 4910 Senior Project (3 units)

Specific work on the senior project with the student's primary reader. Requirements depend upon the student's Concentration Track.

RLGN 4920 Senior Project Workshop (1 unit)

A two semester practical workshop with other students working on their senior project. The workshop orients students to thesis or project options, choice of primary reader and the process and requirements of the senior project.

RLGN 4992 Thesis Continuation (0 units)

If after taking RLG 4910 & 4920 a student has not completed the senior project, s/he enrolls in this course in order to complete. The reader must be consulted prior to enrolling to make sure s/he will be available during the semester in which the student wishes to complete. Please note that most readers are unavailable during the summer. Also note, students who do not complete the project during thesis continuation are required to re-enroll in RLG 4910 for 3-units at the full course rate. This course has a flat fee. Check with Business Services for the current fee.

RLGN 4994 Teaching Assistant (1-3 units)

The privilege of serving as a teaching assistant is available to students who are interested with the approval of the Department Chair, the instructor concerned, and the Dean of the School. A contract between the student and the instructor to determine goals, specifics on project contents/materials, and evaluation process will be required at time of request. Course may be taken for 1-3 units.

RLGN 4996 Internship: Religion (1-3 units)

Students gain practical, hands-on training in their particular area of career or volunteer interest by working with an organization of their choosing, in consultation with their academic advisor and the Career and Internship office. Student have interned with churches, non-profit organizations, retreat centers, and camps. After meeting with the academic advisor, students meet with the Career and Internship office to fill out the necessary paperwork and, then, after securing all necessary signatures, submit an add/drop form along with the internship paperwork to the Registrar. This course cannot be accessed via the self-service registration cart. 1-3 units.

RLGN 4999 Independent Study (1-3 units)

The privilege of independent study is possible for students who are prepared to undertake it based on student need or interest with approval of the Chair of the department, the instructor concerned, and the Dean of the School. The study must be in an area not covered by a regularly scheduled course. Course may be taken for 1-3 units. The maximum number of units that can be earned in

one semester by independent study is 3; a total of up to six units of independent study may be applied to the degree.