

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELS)

Not all the courses listed below will be offered in any given year. Applicants should consult the Department about the courses to be offered. All courses are 3.0 credit units except RELS 898, which is 6.0 credit units.

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Required Courses

RELS 800 Professional Development Seminar

Monthly seminar series for building graduate students' professional academic and alt-academic skills through workshops, Q&As, and presentations about topics including: publishing, conferencing, funding, applying for further graduate study or employment, etc. Topics will be timed to the appropriate point in the cycle of each academic year (i.e. sessions on SSHRC and OGS will occur early in Fall semester). This is a mandatory course. This course is graded on a Pass/Fail basis. Fall/Winter/Summer.

RELS 801 Core Course I: Religion and Modernity

Examines the nature of religious transition in response to various pressures for religious change. Fall.

RELS 802 Core Course II: Theory and Method in Religious Studies

Looks at recent articulations and applications of theories and methods in Religious Studies. Winter.

RELS 898 Master's Essay

A research essay. The Master's Essay must demonstrate appropriate competence in the application of theoretical and methodological approaches to a suitable research topic in the study of religion. The Master's Essay will not be subject to an oral defence but will normally be read by one member of the department in addition to the essay supervisor.

Dedicated Graduate Courses

Two of these courses will be offered each year.

RELS 808 Readings in Religion I

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading of one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies. Fall.

RELS 809 Readings in Religion II

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading of one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies.

RELS 884 Feminist Studies and Religious Studies

Examination of feminist theory and its application to the study of religion.

RELS 885 Religious Fundamentalisms

Religious fundamentalism is a modern phenomenon not exclusive to any religion. In the past few decades, religious fundamentalist movements have been shaping new social, cultural and political norms in a predominately secular age. The course explores theoretical aspects and examines specific case studies across various religions and cultures. Offered jointly with RELS 385 with additional work required for graduate students.

EXCLUSION: RELS 385

RELS 886 Religion and Technology

Examines the connections between religion and the rise of technology in the modern period.

RELS 887 Problems in Ancient Mediterranean Religions

An interdisciplinary study of the religions and mythical traditions of Mediterranean and Near Eastern cultures from the Bronze Age to Late Antiquity. Topics will vary according to instructor. The course will have special regard for, but not be limited to, the Levant, and the Greek and Roman world. Winter.

Cross-listed Courses

These courses will be offered concurrently with a linked undergraduate course. A maximum of 1.0 courses (6 credit units) from this list is permitted for the M.A.

M.A. students will be required to attend classes with the undergraduate students but will have separate course requirements including additional readings and different assignments. They will also meet with the instructor on occasion separately from the undergraduate students.

RELS 806 Directed Special Studies 1

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading in one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies. Winter.

RELS 807 Directed Special Studies 2

Advanced seminar providing detailed reading in one contemporary theme or thinker in Religious Studies.

RELS 810 Modern and Contemporary Christian Thought



Exemplary work in recent and contemporary Christian theology.

RELS 811 Jesus: The Continuing Historical Quest

This course provides an introduction to the methods and premises used in the modern quest to understand the historical facts of Jesus life. Particular attention will be given to understanding the historical Jesus in his first-century socio-cultural context. Offered jointly with RELS 311.

EXCLUSION: RELS 311

RELS 812 Christian Feminist Theology

Issues raised by the feminist critique of traditional Christian theology and feminist attempts at theological reconstruction.

RELS 814 Queering Religion

This course examines the complex intersection of gender, sexuality and religion and the ways in which religious traditions have shaped and continue to shape complex notions of gender and sexuality in the modern era. It considers a review of feminist, gender studies and queer theories, thereafter we will apply these concepts to case studies. Offered jointly with RELS 314. (3.0 credit units).

EXCLUSION: RELS 314

RELS 816 Living with the Dead: Religion, Culture, and Death

In this interactive, inquiry-based course students will develop their own research project in order to explore how human beings attempt to live with the dead and to share spaces and lives with those who are no longer alive. (Offered jointly with RELS 316 with additional work required for graduate students.) (3.0 credit units)

EXCLUSION: RELS 316

RELS 821 Greek and Roman Religions

A study of the development and organization of non-civic religious associations in the Greek and Roman empires using inscriptions, papyri, and literary texts. Insight into religious practices of the Greco-Roman period comes through exploration of groups organized by deity, cult, occupation, or ethnic identity, and the so-called mystery religions. Fall.

RELS 822 Yoga in India and the West

Surveys the history and philosophy of yoga in India and the West. Yoga practicum: estimated cost \$85.00. Winter.

RELS 826 Religion and Politics in Muslim Societies

Explores the role of religion in the politics of Muslim societies with particular attention to the modern period. Fall. .

RELS 827 Indigenous Traditions in North America

Introduction to the study of Indigenous traditions in North America.

RELS 828 Apocalypse

The primary focus of the course will be the theological perspectives and social functions of apocalyptic in select religious traditions. The course will also survey the appropriation of apocalyptic themes throughout history in artistic forms such as art, fiction, and film, with particular attention to our modern times and cultures. Offered jointly with RELS 328.

EXCLUSION: RELS 328.

RELS 831 Religion and Violence

Links between violence and religious beliefs, practices, and institutions; for example, sacrifice, holy wars, scapegoating, and suicide. Winter.

RELS 832 Race, Ethnicity, and Religion

The course will explore the intersection of race, ethnicity, and religion, alongside gender, sexuality, culture and more. It will challenge students to think about how racial identities, theories, and movements implicate(d) the way religious communities construct their own systems and worldviews. (Offered jointly with RELS 332 with additional work required for graduate students.) (3.0 credit units)

EXCLUSION: RELS 332

RELS 834 Jewish Views of the Other

A study of the tensions that come into play as Jews formulated views of the Other to balance co-existence with them. Source materials include authoritative writings of Jewish commentary and law and social scientific views of them.

RELS 840 Religion and Democracy

Deals with the role of religion in the public sphere and its relation to liberal democracy. It examines the (in)compatibility of some tenets of certain religions with modern democratic principles. Winter.

RELS 841 Spirituality, Secularity, and Nonreligion

A study of concepts intended to summarize positions which are necessarily defined in reference to religion but considered to be other than religious. We explore the origins and presence of perspectives and experiences including the secular, spiritual –but-not-religious, atheistic, and other forms of imitation, indifference, and hostility to religion.

RELS 842 Indigenous epistemologies of the environment

The seminar deals with the knowledges and practices through which Indigenous peoples conceptualize and approach what the West calls "Nature". Applying their underlying principles, we further analyze contemporary initiatives to promote interspeciesism, and to grant rights to Nature and legal personhood to different elements of the environment. (3.0 credit units). Offered jointly with RELS 342. Fall.

EXCLUSION: RELS 342

RELS 846 AI, Biohacking, and Future Technologies

This course looks at issues raised by the intersection of religion and human enhancement technologies. We will consider categories of biohacking, AI, and possible future technologies including mind uploading. Engaging diverse religious issues, we will consider what it means to be human and "better." (3.0 credit units) Offered jointly with RELS 346.

EXCLUSION: RELS 346

RELS 847 Gender and Sexuality in Islam

This course explores conversations regarding women, gender, and sexuality in Islam from classical to the modern period. This is a survey course that utilizes gender and religious studies theories. We will engage with textual traditions of Muslim women and contemporary treatment of women and queer Muslims in Muslim societies. (Offered jointly with RELS 347 with additional work required for graduate students.) (3.0 credit units)

EXCLUSION: RELS 347

RELS 852 The Contemporary Religious Situation

Religion in modernity; traditional groups, newer religious movements, contemporary ideologies and social trends of religious significance. Offered jointly with RELS 452.

EXCLUSION: RELS 452

RELS 854 Theory in Religious Studies

An introduction to major theoretical approaches to the study of religion. Offered jointly with RELS 354. Fall.

EXCLUSION: RELS 354

RELS 856 Christianity and American Politics

Christianity has significantly shaped U.S. politics, policies, and societal norms. The course examines this impact, especially in light of the constitutional separation of church and state. It delves into how Christian beliefs influence political ideologies and legislation, and its role in shaping voter perceptions and behaviors. The course also addresses the ethics of religious influence in politics, policymaking, and electoral processes, and its global implications, particularly in foreign policy and international relations. (Offered jointly with RELS 356 with additional work required for graduate students.) (3.0 credit units)

EXCLUSION: RELS 356

RELS 868 Religion and Business Ethics

Students will develop background knowledge and analytic skills necessary to identify and negotiate religious commitments in business relationships and resolve ethical issues around the role of religion in business contexts. We will analyze case studies to explore various ways in which business practitioners can and do address questions arising in everyday interactions in the business world. Offered jointly

with RELS 368 with additional work required for graduate students.) (3.0 credit units)

EXCLUSION: RELS 368

RELS 888 Critical Ethnography in the Study of Religion

The course will engage in the theory and method of ethnography as it has been used in the study of religion. It will engage with various examples of ethnographic case studies, particularly as they interrogate questions of insider/outsider positionalities while exploring ways in which gender, sexuality and race, trauma and safety have been negotiated in various field work projects by religious studies scholars.

RELS 893 Buddhism in the Modern World

Encounter between Buddhism and the West, major movements and thinkers, and socio-politically engaged Buddhism.

RELS 894 Religion and Politics in Contemporary China

Examines Chinese and foreign religions in mainland China from 1949 to the present day. Topics include the status of established religions, the political control of new religious movements and the resurgence of traditional Chinese religion and ideologies including Daoism and Confucianism.

RELS 896 Islam in the Modern World

Exploration of Islamic developments since the 19th century: major thinkers, trends of thought, and contemporary movements as responses to modernity. Offered jointly with RELS 396.

EXCLUSION: RELS 396.

RELS 897 Judaism in the Modern Age

The development of modern Jewish religious thought and practice, including the Reform, Orthodox, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements. The consequences of the Holocaust and the establishment of the modern state of Israel. Fall.