

LAFAYETTE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Course Descriptions Fall 2019

REL 101: RELIGIONS IN WORLD CULTURES

This course introduces the academic study of religion and religious phenomena through a critical survey of the beliefs, worldviews, practices, and institutions of the major world religions. We examine different forms of religious experience, together with the myths, symbols, rituals, and institutions through which they are expressed. The course employs a variety of methodologies and source materials. [GM2, H, V]

01 Tull TR 11:00-12:15 pm

02 Tull TR W 7:00-9:50 pm

REL 102: CONTEMPORARY RELIGIOUS ISSUES

Questions confronting Western religious traditions in the 20th century including the condition and stature of humans in the world of technology, the conflict between old and new moralities, the crisis of belief and disbelief, and being human in modern society. Offered fall and spring semesters. [SS,V]

Hendrickson MWF 8:00-8:50 am

REL 103: RELIGION, MYTH, AND FANTASY

This course examines the nature of myth, fantasy, the fantastic, and their relation to religion and religious expression. We consider a variety of texts, tales, and films representing a wide range of historical times, artistic forms, and religious cultures. The focus is upon the modes through which these works convey different kinds of religious experience and religious meaning. The themes concentrated upon include but are not limited to: the conflict between good and evil, the fate of the soul after death, and the boundaries between what are perceived as the real and the unreal. [GM1, H, V]

Ziolkowski TR 9:30-10:45 am

REL 212: BUDDHISM

An introduction to the development of Buddhism and its spread throughout Asia. The course begins with the rise of Buddhism in India and the development of Buddhist philosophy and religious practice. It then examines Buddhism in China, Japan, Tibet, southeast Asia, and the West, focusing on adaptations in Buddhist practice and belief in different environments. Counts toward Asia Culture Cluster and Asian Studies major and minor. [GM1, GM2, H, V]

Rinehart TR 2:45-4:00 pm

REL 214: CHRISTIANITY

A study of the main branches of Christianity—Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic, and Protestant—with reference to their common biblical inheritance, historical developments, characteristic doctrines, institutional expressions, and global spread. Readings are assigned in authors representing the viewpoints studied. [GM2, H,V]

Ziolkowski TR 8:00-9:15 am

REL 215: ISLAM: HISTORY, FAITH, AND PRACTICE

This course is an introduction to Islam, a religion that flowered into a world civilization. It covers the vast and dynamic range of Muslim religious life from the time of Muhammad to the present. The broad survey spans the foundational texts of the Quran and prophetic traditions as well as later Islamic thought, including jurisprudence, theology, and mysticism. The course highlights modern debates within and about Islam. Topics include political Islam, religious pluralism, the limits of jihad, and the possibilities of Islamic feminism. [H, V]

Patel MW 12:45 – 2:00 pm

REL 216: RELIGIONS IN AFRICA: CONTEMPORARY AND HISTORICAL EXPRESSIONS

This course is an introduction to the study of traditional African religious systems, thought, and experience. The course explores the way African religions are related to different forms of social organization and conflict, notions of authority, and power. It also explores the ways African religious thought and practice have been affected by and transformed through colonization, missionary activity, and the continent's integration into the global economy. [GM2, SS, V, H]

Blunt MW 11:00-12:15 pm

REL 223: RELIGIOUS HEALING AND HEALTH

Religion and healing have been closely linked for millennia. Since the advent of biomedical healthcare, the relationship between religion and healing has become less clear and sometimes even controversial. This course examines how various religious traditions have understood sickness and health and how they have tried to restore wholeness to sick individuals and groups. We look at the efficacy of religious healing, the interface between modern medicine and folk healing, and the importance of cultural narratives in restoring the sick to health. Throughout the course, we read and discuss both academic analyses of religious healing and firsthand accounts and cases of religious and folk healthcare. [H,SS]

Hendrickson MWF 9:00- 9:50 am

REL 225: SEX, GENDER, AND RELIGION

How have religions helped shaped attitudes about traditional gender roles? This course explores ideas about gender and sexuality in the world's major religions. Topics include ideas about gender from texts and oral traditions, ideas regarding gender and spiritual capability, and the connection between religious notions of gender and larger social, political, and economic issues. The course also examines various feminist critiques of religion and reform movements within religious traditions. [GM1, H]

Carr TR 1:15-2:30 pm

REL 255: SACRIFICE: VIOLENCE AND RITUAL

What do the Eucharist, the ritual slaughter of oxen, and military service have in common? They all share sacrificial elements: the giving up of something, often the life of some being (broadly understood), in order to constitute the sacredness or boundary of a community. This course examines the role of sacrifice in religion, ritual, and even secular social formations such as nationalism. The course thus explores both theories of sacrifice and the significance of sacrifice in different social and historical contexts. [H, SS, GM1, GM2,W]

Blunt MW 12:45-2:00 pm

REL 304: SPIRITUALITY AND TRANSFORMATION

This course explores different conceptualizations of spirituality and transformation primarily through the lens of Islamic mysticism (Sufism), but also through Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), and the contemporary (primarily American) Self-Help industry. Sources include both primary and secondary texts, including translations when appropriate. [GM1, H]

Patel M W 2:45-4:00 pm

REL 350: RELIGIONS ON THE MOVE: DYNAMIC APPROACHES TO THE RELIGIOUS HISTORY OF THE AMERICAS

Typical narratives of religious history in the Americas start with the arrival of Christian Europeans on the eastern seaboard who then inevitably move westward across the hemisphere, converting or displacing all in their path. This seminar-style course presents alternatives to this colonial story by examining various histories and ethnographies of religious people that move, instead, on north/south axes, from west to east, or in multi-directional ways. Emphasis is placed on transnational flows and cultural contact. [GM2, W]

Hendrickson TR 11:00-12:15 pm

REL 390 INDEPENDENT STUDY

REL 490: CAPSTONE

REL 495: THESIS