

# LAFAYETTE

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## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

### Course Offerings Spring 2020

#### **REL 101: RELIGIONS IN WORLD CULTURES**

This course introduces religion by surveying the worldviews, practices, and institutions of global religious traditions. It considers both common and distinctive spiritual preoccupations of religious practitioners and the astounding variety of religious expression across the human family. It examines the historical development of religions, their sacred writings, their myths, rituals, and symbols, and their contemporary forms. The course is also concerned with methods of studying religion. [GM2, H, V]

**01 RINEHART MWF 9:00 – 9:50 am**  
**02 BLUNT MWF 2:10 – 3:00 pm**

#### **REL 202: CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES**

In this class, we read and study the Christian Scriptures, also known as the New Testament. Besides looking at the various genres of literature in the New Testament, we examine the central figures of Jesus, Paul, and the early Christian Church. Of particular interest in this course are the Jewish and Roman cultural, religious, and political contexts in which the Christian Scriptures were born. [H,V]

**HENDRICKSON TR 1:15 -2:30 pm**

#### **REL 204: INDIA'S RELIGIOUS TEXTS**

This course introduces the oral and written traditions of South Asian religions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, and Islam with selections from a range of texts including the Vedas; biographies of the Buddha; Hindu, Sikh, and Islamic mystical and devotional poetry. The course examines the use of oral and written traditions in religious practice. [GM1, H, V]

**RINEHART MW 1:15 – 2:30 pm**

#### **REL 207: THE QURAN**

Over one billion Muslims believe that the Quran contains the literal words of God. This course attempts to orient students to the most sacred scripture of Islam. It will explore the Quran as an oral, visual, and fluid text. The Quran swiftly traverses concepts such as love and justice, estrangement and community, war, and peace, heaven and hell, good and evil. Occasionally, comparisons will be drawn to other sacred scriptures as well. [H, V]

**PATEL TR 11:00 – 12:15 pm**

#### **REL 213: JUDAISM**

An introduction to the religion, history, and literature of the Jewish people. Among the areas covered are: the biblical heritage; the development of rabbinic Judaism; ritual and practice; medieval philosophy and practice, and the reactions of Jews to modernity, such as political emancipation, immigration to America, the Holocaust, the state of Israel, and issues of gender. [GM1, H, V]

**CARR MW 11:00 am - 12:15 pm**

#### **REL 222: INTERRELIGIOUS CONFLICT & COOPERATION**

This course explores the intersection of religion, ethics and politics through the lens of interreligious cooperation and conflict. It focuses on the connected histories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam-the "Abrahamic faiths"-through a study of doctrine, ritual, and social life. Special attention is given to practices of representing "nonbelievers" and to historical interactions between the religious communities in order to highlight the complexity, fluidity and dynamism of religious identity. [GM1, H, V]

**PATEL TR 9:30 – 10:45 am**

#### **REL 228: RELIGION AND POLITICS IN AFRICA**

This course is a critical introduction to the study of politics and the way religious forces and discourses have shaped and continue to shape general notions of the good in African societies and nations. The course will begin with classic studies of institutions of social and moral order in Africa and will move through the way African religious and political systems came into articulation with the colonial and postcolonial state. The second half of the course will examine moral quandaries like political corruption, and moral reform movements like Pentecostalism, against the backdrop of economic structural adjustment and the decreased sovereignty of African nations. [GM1, GM2, H, SS ;W]

**BLUNT MWF 10:00 – 10:50 am**

**REL 232: RELIGIONS IN LATIN AMERICA**

This course focuses on how religious practices and beliefs have contributed to culture, ethnic identity, and public life over time in Mexico, Central and South America, and the Spanish-speaking Caribbean. The role of the Catholic Church in colonization and nation formation, and its place in popular culture is considered. Other topics include the rise and spread of Protestant Christianity in the region as well as indigenous and African-origin religions. [GM2, H]

**HENDRICKSON TR 2:45 – 4:00 pm**

**REL 250: ANTHROPOLOGY OF RELIGION**

The discipline of anthropology has had something of a unique relationship to the scientific study of religion. From an early moment in the discipline's development, it self-consciously separated itself from the more philological and theological approaches to the study of religion that characterized scholarly investigations of world religions, namely Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism. As the United States and European colonial powers expanded into places like Africa, Native North America, Melanesia, and Australia (to name a few), different national traditions of anthropology developed an ever evolving "toolbox" of approaches and techniques for understanding the religious lives of Euro-American Others. This course is an introduction to this "toolbox" of anthropological theories and methods for studying religion from the Victorian era to the present. The course will also attend to voices in the discipline critical of the way anthropology constructs religion as an object of analysis. [SS, W] (\*Cross-listing A&S 250)

**BLUNT M 7:00 – 9:50 pm**

**REL 260: GLOBAL MUSLIM LITERATURE AND FILM**

This course introduces students to global Muslim culture and civilization through literature and film. Geographic regions include the Middle East, South Asia, Africa, North America and Europe; historical periods span both pre-modern and modern. Topics covered include but are not limited to: constructions of race, religion, and gender; diaspora and immigration; political Islam and Islamophobia in cultural contexts. Course materials focus on fictional storytelling although characters and plots may be rooted in actual historical events. [H, GM2]

**PATEL R 1:10 -- 4:00 pm**

**REL 307: JEWISH EXPERIENCE IN POLAND**

The course traces the development of Jewish civilization in Poland, the spiritual and demographic heart of Judaism, examining distinctive Jewish movements and institutions and the flowering of secular Jewish culture in the early twentieth century. The course also considers the controversial issue of Jewish-Polish relations before, during, and after World War II. Finally, it confronts the rebirth of a Jewish community in Poland since 1989, the place of Jews and Judaism in Polish collective memory, and tensions between the two. [GM1, GM2, H, W]

**CARR R 7:00 - 9:50 pm**

**REL 308: VISUAL CULTURE AND RELIGIOUS IDENTITY**

This course introduces the concept of visual culture as a window into the study of religion. Secondary texts are juxtaposed with primary sources. These sources suggest the construction of religious communities and identities has taken place in the context of cultural exchange. We look at how various traditions have used images to construct community boundaries and ideologies. What and when have communities shared, disputed, and diverged? How has the presentation of "others" been an aspect of religious identity? [H, GM1, W]

**CARR MW 2:45 – 4:00 pm**

**REL 390: INDEPENDENT STUDY [W]**

**REL 495: THESIS [W]**