

LAFAYETTE

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Course Offerings Spring 2021

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 ZIOLKOWSKI TR 8:00 – 9:15 am (remote)
02 MA TR 1:15 – 2:30 pm (remote)

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]

01 HENDRICKSON MWF 8:00 – 8:50 am (remote)
02 HENDRICKSON MWF 10:00 -10:50 am (remote)

REL 212: BUDDHISM: FROM INDIA TO ASIA AND BEYOND

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 Asian Studies major and minor. [GM1, GM2, H, V]

RINEHART TR 1:15 – 2:30 pm (in-person)

REL 213: JUDAISM

This course introduces Judaism as a major global religion practiced in diverse forms for more than 2000 years. Starting with ancient Israelite religion and its legacy in the Hebrew Bible, we examine versions of Judaism that developed in the Hellenistic and Roman worlds, arriving at the rabbinic form, which eventually predominates within both Muslim and Christian civilizations. Along the way we sample classic sacred texts to understand Jewish beliefs and values. After next charting the dramatic confrontation of Jews and Judaism with modernity, we explore the contours of contemporary Jewish life and practice in America and Israel. Counts toward Jewish Studies minor. [GM1, H, V]

CARR MWF 3:10 – 4:00 pm (remote)

REL 215: ISLAM

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 MWF 10:00 – 10:50 am (remote)

REL 218: CONFUCIANISM: SELF AND SOCIETY

Who was Confucius, and what is Confucianism? How did people in a Confucian society perceive and define selves, families, society, and state? How have these notions sustained a millennia-long civilization and religious tradition in East Asia? Revolving around the themes of self and society, this course explores the philosophical and cultural history of the Confucian tradition from its inception to the present day. Probing the cultural, religious, gender, and sociological aspects of Confucianism, students will develop a systematic understanding of the intersections and interactions of individual, community, and society in countries under a Confucian tutelage. Course materials consist primarily of canonical texts and modern scholarship, supplemented by literary narratives and movies. [GM1, GM2, H, V]

* Pending approval by the Curriculum and Educational Policy Committee.]

MA TR 2:45 – 4:00 pm (in-person)

REL 222: INTERRELIGIOUS COOPERATION & CONFLICT

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. [H, GM1, V]

Prerequisite: REL 101 or permission of the instructor.

PATEL MWF 9:00 -9:50 am (remote)

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, W]

HENDRICKSON TR 11:00 am – 12:15 pm (remote)

REL 240: THEORIES OF RELIGION

What is religion? What is the nature of religious belief? What roles does religion play in society? How can we study and understand religion? There have been many attempts to answer these questions from the perspectives of sociology, anthropology, philosophy, psychology, comparative religion, and the feminist critique of religion. This course examines representative theories of the nature and study of religion, paying close attention to the contexts within which these theories arise, and how effective they are in leading to an understanding of religious beliefs and practices. [H, SS, W]

ZIOLKOWSKI TR 9:30-10:45 am (in-person)

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. [GM2, H]

PATEL M 1:10-4:00 pm (remote)

REL 325: 20TH CENTURY AFRICAN AMERICAN RELIGIONS

This seminar examines African American religion as a social institution that emerged in the wake of slavery and the failure of Reconstruction. Many who converted to Christianity during enslavement considered their practices resistance to white Christianity, a pattern that continued. We analyze lynching and the Exodus of Blacks from the South, vodou, Black Islam, the Civil Rights Movement, and look at constructions and representations of Black family and gender.

CARR MW 1:15–2:30 pm (remote)

REL 390: INDEPENDENT STUDY [W]

REL 490: SENIOR CAPSTONE [W]

REL 495: THESIS [W]