



**UNC  
GREENSBORO**

Department of  
Religious Studies

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 101-01, 02: Introduction to Religious Studies [GPR, GL, MAC CTI-HFA]**

**01: Online-ASYN**

**02: Online-ASYN**

**David McDuffie**

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion. Entailed in this study will be an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the meaning attributed to the concept of religion and to assess the ways in which religious traditions, communities, and individuals function within and consequently influence human culture.

Furthermore, the course will consist of an examination of the ways in which cultures influence various conceptions of religious faith and practice. During the semester, we will explore a variety of beliefs, rituals, and concepts associated with a diversity of religious traditions and expressions in order to evaluate the significance of religion and religious thought, both historically and in a contemporary context.

## **REL 101-03: Introduction to Religious Studies [GPR, GL, MAC CTI-HFA]**

**ONLINE-ASYN**

**Staff**

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion. Entailed in this study will be an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the meaning attributed to the concept of religion and to assess the ways in which religious traditions, communities, and individuals function within and consequently influence human culture.

Furthermore, the course will consist of an examination of the ways in which cultures influence various conceptions of religious faith and practice. During the semester, we will explore a variety of beliefs, rituals, and concepts associated with a diversity of religious traditions and expressions in order to evaluate the significance of religion and religious thought, both historically and in a contemporary context.

**"In fact, if I went back to college today, I think I would probably major in comparative religion because that's how integrated [religion] is in everything that we are working on and deciding and thinking about in life today."**

**--John Kerry**

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 111-01: Introduction to Asian Religions [GPR, MAC GEIL]**

**MW 3:00 pm - 4:45 pm**

**Rohit Singh**

This course presents a survey of historical and contemporary Asian religious traditions. The religions we will explore include Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, and Sikhism. Through closely examining beliefs, rituals, ceremonies, and scriptures, we will compare and contrast key similarities and key differences among these religions. We will also trace the social, political, and historical contexts out of which these religious traditions have arisen and developed. We will see that different religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam have developed in close relationship and interaction with one another through debate, dialogue, and the sharing of sacred traditions. In the course of this study, we will develop an appreciation for the unity and diversity found among different Asian religions.

## **REL 132-01: Religious Diversity in America [GPR, MAC DivEq]**

**TR 11:00 am - 12:15 pm**

**Dana Logan**

American religion has been defined by immigration and new religious movements, creating a staggering array of religious communities in the United States. This course introduces the diversity of religions in the United States and focuses on the difference between encounter, tolerance, religious creativity, and pluralism.

## **REL 202-01: Hebrew Bible [GHP, GPM, MAC GEIL]**

**Online-ASYN**

**Ellen Haskell**

This course offers an introduction to the Hebrew Bible and the religion of ancient Israel. Through lecture, critical reading of primary and secondary sources, and discussion, we will come to understand this complex text not only as a work of literature, but also as the product of distinct cultural and historical environments. We will not read the entire Bible! Rather, we will explore a selection of readings that represent the Bible's main literary genres and themes. Central concerns of the course will be the relationship between history, theology, and ideology in this diverse text, as well as topics in biblical spirituality such as covenant, prayer, prophecy, doubt, and love.

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 204-01: New Testament and the Origins of Christianity [GHP, GPM, MAC GEIL]**

**TR 9:30 am -10:45 am**

**Andrew Mbuvi**

This course is a study of the New Testament texts in their historical, sociological, literary and religious contexts. The course situates the New Testament writings within their first-century Greco-Roman world out of which Jesus and Christianity emerged, within the First Century Jewish world of the Pre- and Post-Temple Jerusalem that would shape it. The sociological, literary and the historical aspects are prioritized over theological issues. The aim is to provide a comprehensive background of the world of the Bible helping the student to better interpret the content of the New Testament.

## **REL 207-01, 02: Critical Thinking about Religion, Faith and Spirituality**

**[GPR, MAC CTI-HFA]**

**01: TR 3:30 pm- 4:45 pm**

**02: TR 5:00 pm -6:15 pm**

**Staff**

Exploration of ways in which religion, faith, and spirituality have been understood in the context of the eclipse of religion in Western culture from the Enlightenment to the present.

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 209-01: Elements of Christian Thought [GPR, GL, MAC GEIL]**

**HYBR: MWF 11:00 am -11:50 am**

**Eugene Rogers**

Why you should take this course:

1. You want to know why Christians think God is three, how they think Jesus saves, why they think God permits evil, what they think God does about it, what they think God does about death, what they think God wants with sex, or what they mean by salvation, anyway.
2. It's a good first course in Christianity, designed to in-form those who know little.
3. It's a good advanced course in Christianity, designed in-terest, even surprise those who know a lot.
4. The readings are some of the greatest hits in Christian thought.

Why you should not take this course:

1. You think of it as Sunday School.
2. You figure you know it all already because you went to church.
3. You're not interested in sex, death, or evil.
4. You don't intend to come very often.
5. You don't intend to do the reading very often.
6. You're afraid thinking is incompatible with Christianity.
7. You intend to write sermons for test essays.
8. You don't like surprises.

You don't tests and weekly responses. Two tests, weekly responses, 45 readings on Canvas, one book. Approx. 60 pages/week. We meet MW. Friday writing assignments.

## **REL 225-01,02: Islam [GPR, GN, MAC GEIL]**

**01: MWF 1:00 pm -1:50 pm**

**02: MWF 10:00 am - 10:50 pm**

**Rohit Singh**

This course presents a survey of historical and contemporary Islamic traditions. We will also study various Islamic traditions—Sunni, Sufi and Shia—in a diversity of cultural contexts.

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 229-01,02: Introduction to African American Religious Traditions**

**[GHP, GMO, MAC DivEq]**

**01: ONLINE-ASYN**

**02: ONLINE-ASYN**

**Andrew Mbuvi**

This course examines the variety of African-American religious practices in this country, with some comparisons to African and Caribbean religious practices. The course will follow more of a historical trajectory starting by examining the West and Central African Religions (Islam and Africana Religions) that formed the religious backgrounds of the slaves brought to America in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. We will then familiarize ourselves with the encounter of the African religious past with Euro-America Christianity, before proceeding on to later African American religious practices, including humanism, Black Jews, Voodoo and others.

## **REL 250 01,02: Religious Traditions and Care of the Earth**

**[ENV, GN, IGS, SUS, MAC DivEq]**

**01: ONLINE-ASYN**

**02: MWF 11:00 am- 11:50 am**

**David McDuffie**

This course is a study of the relationship between religion and the natural environment. Major topics to be covered will include the relationship between religion and ecology, the potential problems that certain religious worldviews pose for valuing non-human nature, and the emerging role of religious perspectives in addressing issues of ecological concern. We will also assess various definitions of the terms religion, spirituality, and nature including ways in which these terms have been employed in both a historical and contemporary context as well as the ways in which interpretations of these terms lead to understandings of the human-nature relationship. The question that will serve as our orientation throughout the semester is the following: In a time of widespread ecological degradation, what is the potential for religion or the religious to offer a significant contribution toward the attainment of sustainable human cultures?

This question will be explored with reference to conceptions of the natural environment from existing religious traditions as well as through an examination of whether concern and care for natural environments can be understood as a form of religious expression.

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 255 01: "Spirituality and the 12 Steps"**

**T 6:00 pm - 8:50 pm**

**Ches Kennedy**

This course will address the dynamics of Alcoholism and other substance use on society and individuals. The course will critically examine the dynamics of alcoholism and substance use disorder with an emphasis on the history, spirituality, and practice of 12-step recovery as developed and articulated by Alcoholics Anonymous.

## **REL 298: Thinking About Religion [WI]**

**TR 11:00 am -12:15 pm**

**Greg Grieve**

This course is required of all Religious Studies majors. This course is not strictly introductory and expects that students have some familiarity with the academic study of religion before taking the course. Ideally, it will be a third or fourth course in the major, taken within a semester of declaring the major.

## **REL 305-01: Religion in the Greco-Roman World: Pagans, Jews and Christians**

**[WI, CW]**

**TR 12:30 pm -1:45 pm**

**Derek Krueger**

This year, the topic for Religion in the Greco-Roman World will be "Pagans, Jews, and Christians: Views of Religious Others." We'll start with early Jewish ideas about Gentiles and non-monotheists, and Greek and Egyptian polytheists' views of Jews. Then we'll look at the rise of Christianity from a movement within Judaism to a movement that defined itself against Judaism. We'll examine Rabbinic Jewish views of Christians, early Christian views of Pagans, and official Roman imperial attitudes toward both Jews and Christians. We'll consider the role and risks of defining religious groups in terms of the others that they are not.

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

**REL 312-01/WGS 312: Judaism and the Construction of Gender [WI, CW, WGS]  
ONLINE-SYNC MW 2:00 pm - 3:15 pm  
Ellen Haskell**

This course examines how Judaism constructs gender through social ideology, literature, religious practice, and law. Topics include Jewish legal discussions regarding women's bodies and reproductive rights, Judaism's construction of masculinity in the context of Western culture, Jewish marriage traditions, Jewish sexuality, Jewish ideas about gendering God, Judaism and LGBTQIA+ identities, and changing Jewish gender norms through time.

**REL 334-01: American Cults  
TR 2:00 pm - 3:30 pm  
Dana Logan**

How could an entire community commit mass suicide? Jonestown, and other so-called cults, have made us deeply suspicious of charismatic leaders and utopian projects, but this course will explore why only some cults end in tragedy. We will explore the history of schismatic religious groups, anti-cult hysteria, and controlling religious authority in American history by focusing on groups such as Jonestown and the FLDS. Most importantly this course asks who gets to call a religion a cult, and whether the term is a useful category for cultural analysis.

**REL 420-01: Nonprofit Internship  
ONLINE-ASYN  
Dana Logan**

Practical experience in a variety of professional settings. Includes 10 hours per week at internship site, plus regular meetings with a faculty adviser.

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## **REL 382-01: God, Body, Sex [WI, CW, WGS]**

**M 3:30 pm -6:20 pm**

**Eugene Rogers**

### Why you should not take this course:

1. You think of it as Sunday School.
2. You think spirituality is a matter of individual experience apart from texts and communities.
3. You think that Catholics, Anglicans, or Eastern Orthodox people aren't really Christians.
4. You don't like philosophy.
5. You prefer historical influence and effect to conceptual analysis.
6. You don't intend to come very often.
7. You're shy about speaking up in a seminar about sex.
8. You prefer to talk about your own views instead of the ones in the readings.
9. You don't want to read an article about sex, love, or desire almost every day of the semester.
10. You're afraid thinking is incompatible with Christianity.
11. You don't want to hear what students of religion think about Christianity.
12. You want to be in a homogeneous group where everyone thinks alike and is pious.
13. You intend to write sermons for papers.
14. You don't like surprises.
15. You're a senior and you've planned to have a good case of senioritis: you've worked for it, you deserve it, and nobody's going to deprive you of it!
16. You're any year and you're pretty sure you need a semester off, but you haven't planned or maybe even ad-mitted it to yourself yet, so you need to flunk out in order to get a break.

### Requirements

1. Reading. This is a reading intensive course. Do the reading before class each week. Print it out and bring it to class. For the first 2/3 of the course, we will read four or five short to medium-length articles for each session. You will have to bring them to class with marks on them.
2. Weekly reading responses.
3. Three 5-page papers

# FALL 2021 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

## Related Courses

### **FMS 140-01: Freshman Seminar in Philosophical, Religious, and Ethical Principles (Religion and Science)**

**MWF 10:00 am - 10:50 am**

**David McDuffie**

This course is a study of the relationship between religion and science. Primary but not exclusive emphasis will be placed on the religion-science debates as they have developed in relation to modern science and understandings of Western theism. Attention will be devoted to the ways in which the fields of religion and science are variously understood from those within these traditions as well as from those who are commenting from a stated outside perspective. Entailed in this will be an analysis of the types of questions offered by scientific and religious individuals and communities. During the semester, we will explore a variety of viewpoints on this relationship in an attempt to arrive at a better understanding of the complexity of the interaction between religion and science in human culture. Particular attention will be devoted to the interaction of religion with evolutionary and ecological science as well as to the ways in which this interaction contributes to environmental concern. This emphasis will then be connected to the ways in which understandings of religion and science relate to cultural diversity and attempts to establish equality and equity in human cultures.

### **FMS 142-01: Strange Stuff the Bible Expects of its Readers**

**TR 9:30 am - 10: 45 am**

**Andrew Mbuvi**

This course we will examine some of the commands, teachings, and characteristics that the Bible expects its readers to adhere to and see how as 21st-century readers of the Bible we can make sense of otherwise, “strange and crazy” stuff in it. To guide us through this process we will be reading A. J. Jacob’s *The Year of Living Biblically* and Rachel Evans’ *The Year of Biblical Womanhood*, whose attempts at a literal adherence of the biblical regulations for a year often end up with uproariously humorous results. Jacobs, a non-practicing Jew offers a Jewish reading of the entire Bible, while Evans, an Evangelical Christian offers a perspective from a feminist conservative believer. Both Evan’s and Jacob’s discoveries are illuminating and often humorous.

# MEET THE FACULTY



**ASHLEE ANDREWS  
ON LEAVE**



**GREG GRIEVE**



**ALYSSA GABBAY  
ON LEAVE**



**ANDREW MBUVI**



**ELLEN HASKELL**



**DEREK KRUEGER**



**ROHIT SINGH**



**DANA LOGAN**



**DAVID MCDUFFIE**



**CHES KENNEDY**



**EUGENE ROGERS**