



SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

REL 100-01, 02: Introduction to World Religions

[GPR, GL, MAC Global and Intercultural]

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 104-01, 02: Religion, Ritual, and the Arts: "Death and Dying"

[GPR, MAC Global and Intercultural]

01: T/TH 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM | 02: T/TH 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM

John Borchert

This course looks at religion and death through ritualizations of death: what people do, how they perform, and how they create meaning around death and dying. Rather than focus primarily on the ideas and ideologies of death and the afterlife, this course instead looks to how these ideas and ideologies play out in practice and are made sensible through action in ritualized settings. We will begin with understanding how to make sense of these rituals, before briefly surveying some dominant traditional religious death rites, before finally looking to American innovations within these traditions, and some uniquely human (and non-human) ritualizations of death.

"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

SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

REL 108-01: Religion and Food
[GPR, MAC Health and Wellness]
T/TH 11:00 AM - 12:15 PM
Ashlee Andrews

This course will explain and compare Hindu, Jain, Christian, Jewish and Muslim foodways and evaluations of food. In the process of this comparative study, we will appraise how each tradition conceptualizes wellness and evaluates eating, feeding, overeating, dieting and fasting to promote or impede upon wellness.

REL 115-01: Religion and Science
[GPR, MAC Diversity and Equity]
M/W/F 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.

REL 201-01, 02: The Bible in Western Culture
[GPR, GL, MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art]
ONLINE - ASYN
Andrew Mbuvi

This course examines the impact of the Bible's encounter with Africans and African-Americans going back to periods of slavery in the Americas and European Colonialism of Africa. We will also look at recent attempts to develop African and African-American hermeneutics and read works by African and African-American biblical scholars and theologians towards this end. Issues of race, slavery, colonialism, exploitation, suppression, and "white supremacy" will be focused on. Comparison will be made to Eurocentric approaches to Biblical interpretation positing the Postcolonial perspective that emerges from the African and African American perspectives.

SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

REL 210-01: Christianity to Reformation
[GHP,GL, GPM, MAC Global and Intercultural]
ONLINE - ASYN
David McDuffie

This course will consist of a survey of Christian history and thought from the beginnings of the early church to the Protestant Reformation.

REL 212-01: Christianity from the Reformation to the Present
[GPR, MAC Global and Intercultural]
ONLINE - ASYN
David McDuffie

Examination of a range of themes in the history of Christian thought from the sixteenth century to the present, through the reading of a variety of texts representative of Christian traditions.

REL 215-01: Judaism
[GHP,GL, GPM, MAC Global and Intercultural]
T/TH 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM ONLINE-SYNC
Ellen Haskell

This course provides a broad introduction to the religious tradition of Judaism. Central topics for the course include Jewish text, history, ritual, thought, and culture. Course readings and discussions stress the creative tension between tradition and innovation that has allowed Judaism to endure as a vital and diverse religion in an ever-changing world.

REL 221-01, 02: Buddhism
[GPR, GN, MAC Global and Intercultural]
01: M/W/F 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM | 02: M/W/F 2:00 PM - 2:50 PM
Rohit Singh

This course presents a survey of historical and contemporary Buddhist traditions. We will examine the rise and development of Buddhism throughout Asia in areas such as India, Southeast Asia, Tibet, and East Asia. Through closely examining doctrines, rituals, ceremonies, and scriptures, we will compare key similarities and key differences among diverse Buddhist traditions such as Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana Buddhism. We will also explore how Buddhist communities throughout Asia have responded to changing social, political, and historical contexts.

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REL 223-01, 02: Hinduism
[GN, GPR, MAC Global and Intercultural]
ONLINE - ASYN
Ashlee Andrews

This course will introduce you to the incredibly diverse and frequently contradictory collection of traditions that fall under the umbrella term 'Hinduism'. We will explore these traditions by looking at texts, practices, religious cultures and socio-political issues that are important to many individuals who identify as Hindu. Our exploration will focus upon contemporary and lived Hinduisms, and will highlight the multiplicity and diversity of Hindu traditions, as well as the manner in which Hinduisms, and scholarly understandings of what constitutes 'Hinduism', are shaped by context, power and history. In the process of our study, we will also wrestle with discerning the meaning of the equally complex term 'Religion', and articulating what it looks like to be a responsible scholar of Hindu traditions.

REL 229-01, 02: Introduction to African American Religious Traditions
[GHP, GMO, MAC Diversity and Equity]
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 233-01: Witches, Spirits, and Metaphysicalism in America
[CW, MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art]
01: M/W/F 12:00 PM - 12:50 PM
Dana Logan

This course focuses on the traditions of paganism, the occult, and metaphysicalism in the US. We will learn about New England witches, Black conjure, spiritualist seances, and the flowering of New Age and Neopaganism in the twentieth century. We will also consider how these traditions relate to institutional religion.

SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

REL 241-01: Jewish Bioethics
[WI, MAC Health and Wellness]
01: T/TH 9:30 AM – 10:45 AM ONLINE - SYNC
Ellen Haskell

This course explores topics in contemporary Jewish Bioethics, including maintaining health, bodily integrity, vaccination, mental health, genetic testing, contraception and abortion, and end-of-life care.

REL 245-01: Video Games and the Problem of Evil
[WI, MAC CritThink Hum and Fine Art]
01: M/W/F 11:00 AM - 11:50 AM
Gregory Grieve

Using a wide range of topics, analytical theories and methods, as well as ethical perspectives, the course introduces students to the concept of evil, digital media, networked society and consumer culture through the critical interpretation of video gaming.

REL 314-01: Saint and Society in the Early Middle Ages [CW]
T/TH 2:00 PM - 3:15 PM
Derek Krueger

Examination of the concept of sanctity and of the rise and function of the veneration of holy men and women in Christian tradition from the fourth to the seventh century.

SPRING 2022 COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

REL 371 -01: Topics in Islam: Muslims and Movies

M/W 3:30 PM - 4:45 PM

Rohit Singh

Explores specific topics in Muslim thought, culture, or history. Topics vary and may include studies in hadith, mysticism, philosophy, or literature.

REL 410-01: Senior Seminar [CW]

T/TH 12:30 PM - 1:45 PM

Dana Logan

We will be thinking about the theme of “taking religion seriously.” When religion scholars read the news we often whine: “if only the politicians/journalists/American public took religion seriously, then things would be different.” But what does taking religion seriously mean? Does it mean believing what someone else believes? Does it mean being neutral to their beliefs? Does it mean critiquing religions (both our own, and others)? This question has been at the core of religious studies for a long time and we will be considering key essays on the topic, but it is also a question that courts take up when they ask if someone’s beliefs are “sincerely held.” We will thus be looking at the differences and similarities between how scholars and non-scholars think about and define religion.

MEET THE FACULTY



ASHLEE ANDREWS



JOHN BORCHERT



GREG GRIEVE



ELLEN HASKELL



DEREK KRUEGER



DANA LOGAN



ANDREW MBUVI



DAVID MCDUFFIE



ROHIT SINGH