

Religious Studies Course Offerings

SPRING

2025

REL 1000: RELIGIONS OF THE WORLD

This course introduces students to the world's religions, including major traditions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, along with smaller indigenous traditions. The approach of the course is objective and academic; it is not designed to advocate any particular religious perspective or ideology. **This is an Integrative Learning Core (ILC) course that awards general education credit; it is one of the basic requirements for the Religious Studies major.**

Section	Instructor	Time
002	Kenny Smith	M W F 8:30-9:20am
003	Kenny Smith	100% Asynchronous Online
004	Kenny Smith	100% Asynchronous Online
005	Claire Hautot	T Th 4:30-5:50pm
006	Claire Hautot	T Th 6:00-7:30pm

REL 1005: NEW TESTAMENT

This course will introduce you to the history, literature, and religion of the earliest period of Christianity (from about 30 to 150 CE). We will see how Christianity arose out of the Jewish religion and how it spread in the Greco-Roman world. We will examine a variety of writings from this period, including the collection of early Christian literature known as the New Testament. You will learn the historical, critical methods by which scholars study these writings as sources for our knowledge of the origins of Christianity. **This is an Integrative Learning Core (ILC) course that awards general education credit.**

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Bradley K. Storin	T Th 9:00-10:20am
002	Delbert Burkett	50-75% Online Asynchronous

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REL 2001: FAITH AND DOUBT

This course considers how religious faith is challenged or supported by various factors, such as reason, morality, organized religion, and the experience of suffering. The course uses a selection of readings from Paine, Hume, Clifford, James, Kierkegaard, Hesse, Weil, Kushner, and others to address the following questions of religious faith and skepticism: (1) Is belief in God compatible with reason? (2) Is it valid to evaluate religious faith by critical reason? (3) What are the limits, if any, of religious knowledge? (4) To what extent is religious belief validated by the existence of moral norms? (5) To what extent does an individual's faith depend upon or come into conflict with organized religion? (6) How has traditional theistic belief and language been challenged or modified by modern religious thinkers? (7) Is religious faith compatible with the experience of suffering and evil?

Section	Instructor	Time
001	Madahuri Yadlapati	T Th 1:30-2:50pm

REL 2027: ASIAN RELIGIONS

Asian civilizations have a long history with far-reaching impact and influence on our global community today. One does not need to travel to Asia to be affected by Asian people, economic and political activities, cuisine, arts and entertainment, health treatment options, and religious orientations. The religious landscape of Asia is crucial to understanding Asian civilizations. This course focuses on a variety of Asian religious traditions, including fundamental teachings of the Hindu, Confucian, Taoist, Shinto, and Buddhist traditions of India, Tibet, China, and Japan. We explore how religious values influence decision-making processes in personal and public spheres. **This is an Integrative Learning Core (ILC) course that awards general education credit; it is also one of the basic requirements for the Religious Studies major.**

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Yohong Roh	M W F 9:30-10:20am
002	Yohong Roh	M W F 10:30-11:20am
003	Yohong Roh	M W F 12:30-1:20pm

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REL/PHIL 2028: PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

Is there an all-powerful, infinitely intelligent, loving being (i.e., God) who created the visible universe and all within it? If so, can the existence of such a being be proven rationally? And if so, is there a rational explanation for the presence of evil in the world that this being created and governs? Does human consciousness survive the death of the physical body? Is it reasonable to believe in miracles, e.g., the claim that Jesus walked on water or that some Hindu saints have brought human beings back from the dead even after they had been cremated? In approaching these, and other, religious questions philosophically, we will focus upon the reasons, evidence, arguments and counterarguments that have been advanced with respect to these questions. The goal of this class is not only to make students familiar with those theories falling under the general rubric of the philosophy of religion, but to further refine each student's ability to reason critically through any sort of logical argument, religious or otherwise. **This is an Integrative Learning Core (ILC) course that awards general education credit.**

Section #	Instructor	Time
001		M W 3:30-4:50pm

REL 2029: JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY, AND ISLAM

This course introduces students to the histories, teachings, beliefs and practices of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Additionally, students will have the opportunity to engage with guest speakers, take field trips to synagogues, churches, and mosques, and watch a number of videos pertaining to contemporary issues (e.g., women's roles, waging war) within these religions. **This is an Integrative Learning Core (ILC) course that awards general education credit; it is one of the basic requirements for the Religious Studies major.**

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Mari Rethelyi	M 6:00-8:50pm

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REL 3000: CHRISTIANITY

This course introduces students to Christianity as a living religious tradition with deep historical roots. We will learn about the main lines of Christian thought and practice across the world. In addition to the lives of Christian saints, leaders, prophets, mystics, and reformers, topics will include the construction of orthodoxy, the development of church leadership, the emergence of Christian artistic traditions, the rise of monasticism, the relationship(s) between Christianity and secular governments, and Christian interaction with other religious traditions. Our scope will be global: we'll see Christianity emerge in the ancient Mediterranean basin and move to Europe, Africa, the Middle East, East Asia, and the Americas. There are no prerequisites for the course, and no prior knowledge is assumed.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Bradley K. Storin	T Th 12:00-1:20pm

REL/ENGL 3124: LITERATURE OF THE ENGLISH BIBLE

This course examines well-known biblical stories and poems. The stories include the tales of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the tower of Babel, the binding of Isaac, Jacob and Esau, the Joseph Story, the tragedy of King Saul, and the miracle tales of the prophet Elijah. The poems include selected hymns and laments from the Book of Psalms. We will approach the literature with two main questions. (1) What literary artistry can we see in the texts? (2) What do the texts tell us about ancient Israelite religion and culture?

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Stuart Irvine	T Th 10:30-11:50am

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REL 3230: RELIGION AND PARAPSYCHOLOGY

This course explores the role of the paranormal in the history of religions, and in the history of scholarly thought about religion. Perhaps most importantly, this course takes seriously alternate ways of understanding the nature of reality and human experiences that fall outside the norms and methods of contemporary thought and science.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Kenny Smith	M W F 10:30-11:20am

REL 4010: A HISTORY OF JESUS

This course examines some of the numerous ways in which Jesus has been portrayed or conceived from ancient times to the present. We consider not only the question of who Jesus was, but also the question of why he has been portrayed in so many different ways. We first examine “the canonical Jesus”: the different portraits of Jesus in the four gospels of the New Testament (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John). We continue with “the apocryphal Jesus”: portraits of Jesus in other early Christian literature that was not included in the New Testament. We then turn to “the orthodox Jesus”: the theological view of Jesus enshrined in the orthodox Christian creeds of the fourth to eighth centuries. We consider how Jesus became a member of the Trinity and how his “nature” was defined as both fully human and fully divine. We next examine “the non-Christian Jesus”: portraits of Jesus in non-Christian religions, such as Judaism and Islam. We then consider how the modern Enlightenment cast doubt on traditional views of Jesus and inaugurated a quest to discover “the historical Jesus.” We next examine “the celluloid Jesus”: portrayals of Jesus in contemporary film. Finally we examine “the fictional Jesus”: portraits of Jesus in fictional literature.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Delbert Burkett	W 6:00-8:50pm

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REL/HIST 4011: AGE OF REFORMATION

This course will examine European religious changes, ca. 1400- 1650. Subjects covered include the reforming movements of Martin Luther, John Calvin and the Anabaptists, as well as Catholic reform and the end of Medieval Latin Christendom. We will examine theology as well as the political, social, and cultural changes in Europe and abroad brought about the splintering of European Christianity.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Christine Kooi	M W F 10:30-11:20am

REL/ENGL 4236: STUDIES IN LITERATURE AND RELIGION: EXISTENTIALISM

Great literature undoubtedly presents the most exciting and imaginative explorations of the big questions of human existence. If you enjoy reading fiction and analyzing issues of meaning and value, this is the course for you! This course will reflect on select existentialist themes including, for example, moral choice, how we navigate questions of meaning and value, conceptions of the sacred, and the development of the individual self. We will read a variety of fiction from different periods of history to consider these questions, including the following possibilities: Thornton Wilder's *Our Town*, Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, Nathaniel Hawthorne's short stories, Goethe's *Faust*, Sophocles' *Antigone*, Flannery O'Connor's short stories, Octavia Butler's *Parable of the Sower*, and Herman Hesse's *Demian*. This course depends heavily on class discussion of readings and written communication.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Madhuri Yadlapati	T Th 12:00-1:20pm

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REL/AAAS 4400: RELIGIOUS THOUGHT OF MLK JR. & MALCOLM X

This course explores the religious thought of Martin Luther King Jr. and Malcolm X through a close examination of their most significant writings and speeches and dispels many myths and popular conceptions of their life and thought.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Stephen Finley	M W 2:00-3:20pm

REL/HIST 4507: HERESY

This course will explore the development of Christian beliefs and traditions through examining the process of debate and disagreement as it occurred from the origins of the movement through the Reformation. We will consider the intertwined nature of heresy and orthodoxy, as well as the role of religious and secular authority. Questions we will keep in mind will include: What is the difference between heresy and other kinds of differences in belief or practice? Who sets boundaries for participation in the religious community and how do they decide where those boundaries are? What happens to those who disagree? How do political, economic and cultural issues influence religious dissent and change? What issues tend to become settled or uncontroversial and what issues re-emerge periodically? We will be guided by the idea that you can learn a lot about how a group develops over time by what issues it considers important enough to argue about, how it attempts to resolve those arguments, and how it decides who is in and who is out.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Sherri Johnson	M W F 9:30-10:20am

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REL 4800: BUDDHISM

In Buddhism, we will read and discuss texts and images relating to the Buddhist tradition. The class will cover the life-story of the Buddha, the life-world of nuns and monks, the doctrines of early and later Buddhism, Buddhist deities and saints, and the development of various Buddhist traditions in different cultures. We will read primary and secondary sources in translation, supplemented by overview lectures on history and philosophy. We will look at Buddhist thought, as well as its art and architecture, its social dynamics and relationship with other traditions. A section on modern and contemporary Buddhism will discuss Buddhist reactions to modernity.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Yohong Roh	M W F 1:30-2:20pm

APPROVED LIST OF SUBSTITUTIONS

Below you will see a list of Spring 2025 courses that, while not officially cross-listed with REL, we will accept as valid substitutions for one of the REL requirements.

If you have any suggestions for courses that should be counted for REL substitution credit, feel free to reach out to Dr. Bradley K. Storin (bstorin@lsu.edu) to discuss it.,

Course	Instructor	Time
AAAS 4900: Civil Rights	Herman Kelly	T Th 12:00-1:20pm
ARTH 4450	Darius Spieth	M W F 10:30-11:20am
HIST 4008: The Later Middle Ages	Sherri Johnson	T Th 1:30-2:50pm
HIST 4044: Stuart England	Victor Stater	M W F 12:30-1:20pm
HNRS 2020: Religion & Other Worlds	Kenny Smith	M W F 2:30-3:20pm
HNRS 2020: God, Good, & Evil	Daniel Felty	T Th 4:30-5:50pm
SCRN 3505: Vampires in Film & TV	Jane Pulliam	T Th 1:30-2:50pm
SOC 4441: Sociology of Religion	Samuel Stroope	T Th 1:30-2:50pm

Religious Studies Faculty Directory



Maria Rethelyi
Ph.D., University of Chicago
Modern European Judaism



Yohong Roh
Ph.D., Temple University
East Asian Buddhism



Lauren Horn Griffin
Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara
Religion, Media, Tech, & Nationalism



Stuart Irvine
Ph.D., Emory University
Old Testament & Ancient Israelite Literature



Bradley K. Storin
Ph.D., Indiana University
History of Christianity



Madhuri Yadlapati
Ph.D., Yale University
World Religions & Modern Religious Thought



Claire Hautot
ABD, University of Chicago
American Religion & the Neoconfederacy



Delbert Burkett
Ph.D., Duke University
New Testament & Christian Origins



Kenny Smith
Ph.D., Emory University
American Religion, New Religious Movements, & Alternative Spiritualities



Michael Pasquier
Ph.D., Florida State University
American Catholicism & Religion in the U.S. South

Religious Studies Major Requirements

Pick Two Core Courses!

- REL 1000: Religions of the World**
- REL 2000: What is Religion?**
- REL 2027: Asian Religions**
- REL 2029: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam**

Take two electives at any level!

- REL ******
- REL ******

Take any three upper-level electives!

- REL 3*** / 4*****
- REL 3***/4*****
- REL 3***/4*****

Take any 4000-level elective!

- REL 4*****

Take the senior capstone!

- REL 4301: Theories of Religion**