

The College of Charleston

Religious Studies Department Fall 2016 Course Brochure

All Religious Studies courses satisfy the Humanities requirement. There is both a major and a minor in Religious Studies for those with a serious interest in the study of religion. All students who have earned 45 credits or more must declare a major by **October 6, 2016**. If you would like to learn more about the Religious Studies major, please speak with your Religious Studies professor or with the Chair.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 34 semester hours, that must include:

- 1) RELS 101 or 105
- 2) RELS 210 Theories in the Study of Religions, only offered in Spring semester
- 3) One of the Western Abrahamic religions: RELS 223 (Ancient Near East), 225 (Judaism), 230 (Christianity), or 235 (Islam)
- 4) One of the Asian religions: RELS 240 (Buddhism), 245 (Hinduism), or 248 (Religions of China & Japan)
- 5) One of the American religions: RELS 250 (American religions), 260 (Native American), 270 (African American)
- 6) One of the Sacred Texts: RELS 201 (Hebrew Bible/Old Testament), 202 (New Testament), 205 (Asian Sacred Texts) or 310* (Sacred Texts) --* if taken as a sacred text course, 2 more 300 level courses are needed
- 7) RELS 450: Senior Seminar in Religious Studies, only offered in the Fall semester
- 8) RELS 451: Capstone Colloquium (1 Credit Hour), only offered in Spring semester
- 9) One additional course at the 200-level or above
- 10) Two additional courses at the 300-level or above
- 11) Additional elective: 1 additional course

With the approval of the Chair of Religious Studies, one course (200 level or above) in a related discipline may be substituted for one of the courses listed under 9 or 10 above.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 18 semester hours (at least three hours of which must be at or above the 300 level), which must include:

- 1) RELS 101 or 105
- 2) One of: RELS 225, 230, 235, 240, 245, 248, 250, 260, 270
- 3) One of: RELS 201, 202, or 205 or 310* (Sacred Texts)--*if taken as a sacred text course, 1 more 300-499 level course is needed (see 4) below)
- 4) One course from RELS 300-499
- 5) Additional Electives: 2 courses from RELS 105-499. With the approval of the Chair of Religious Studies, one course (200 level or above) in a related discipline may be substituted for number 4 above.

CRN	Course #	Course Name	Professor	Day	Time	Location
12318	FYSE 134.01	Gods, Goddesses, and Life After Death: an Introduction to World Religions	CORMACK	MWF	9:00 – 9:50	ECTR 103
10685	HONS 175.01	The Virtuous Life	DOIRE	TR	9:25 – 10:40	10 GW
13360	HONS 381.02	Becoming American	CRESSLER	MW	2:00 -- 3:15	MYBK 320
10813	RELS101.01	Approaches to Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith	BJERKEN	TR	9:25 -- 10:40	ECTR 219
10814	RELS101.02	Approaches to Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith	BJERKEN	TR	12:15 – 1:30	ECTR 219
10815	RELS101.03	Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements	HUDDLESTUN	MWF	11:00 – 11:50	ECTR 219
12143	RELS101.04	Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements	HUDDLESTUN	MWF	12:00 – 12:50	ECTR 219
13304	RELS 101.05	Approaches to Religion: Sacred and Special Stuff	CRESSLER	TR	10:50 – 12:05	ECTR 103
13312	RELS 101.06	Approaches to Religion: Sacred and Special Stuff	CRESSLER	TR	1:40 – 2:50	ECTR 103
10816	RELS105.01	Introduction to World Religions	CORMACK	MWF	10:00 - 10:50	ECTR 116
10817	RELS105.02	Introduction to World Religions	MCDANIEL	TR	9:25 - 10:40	ECTR 103
10818	RELS105.03	Introduction to World Religions	DOIRE	MWF	12:00 – 12:50	ECTR 103
13313	RELS 105.04	Introduction to World Religions	DOIRE	MWF	1:00 – 1:50	ECTR 103
11868	RELS115.01	Religion and Society: Religion & Society in India & Tibet	BJERKEN	TR	5:30 – 6:45	ECTR 219
11869	RELS120.02	Religion, Art, & Culture: Music and Religion in American Culture	TEPERA	TR	3:05 – 4:20	ECTR 103
13314	RELS220.01	Comparative Religious Ethics	DOIRE	MW	4:00 – 5:15	ECTR 219
13315	RELS225.01	The Jewish Tradition	HUDDLESTUN	MW	4:00 – 5:15	ECTR 103
13316	RELS260.01	Native American Religions	IRWIN	MWF	9:00 - 9:50	ECTR 219
13317	RELS260.02	Native American Religions	IRWIN	MWF	10:00 – 10:50	ECTR 219
11650	RELS298.01	Special Topics: The Spirit of Sustainability	LEVASSEUR	MWF	11:00 - 11:50	ECTR 103
11651	RELS298.02	Special Topics: Goddesses in World Religions	MCDANIEL	TR	1:40 – 2:55	ECTR 219
13318	RELS335.01	Western Esotericism	IRWIN	MW	2:00 – 3:15	ECTR 219
11406	RELS450.01	Senior Seminar- Spirituality	SIEGLER	TR	12:15 – 1:30	MYBK 119

FYSE 134.01: Gods, Goddesses, and Life After Death: an Introduction to World Religions
Prof. Margaret Cormack For Freshmen Section 001 (MWF 09:00- 09:50) ECTR 103

This course will introduce you to the beliefs, practices, and history of some of the major religions of the world. We will approach each tradition impartially, studying its beliefs about divinity/ies, the universe, the place and obligations of human beings within that universe, and the afterlife. We will see some of the ways these concepts are represented in cultural artifacts: poetry, art, literature. You will learn how people from different cultures look at the world, and how to think critically yet sympathetically about a variety of world-views.

HONS 175.01: The Virtuous Life
Prof. Louise Doire For Honors Students Section 001 (TR 09:25- 10:40) HONS 10GW

In this course students will explore and examine the nature of various religious ethical traditions and how these ethical perspectives are grounded in text, culture and tradition. In this course we will utilize a narrative approach- both ancient and contemporary myths and stories- as the point of departure for the study of the ethical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. We will also consider the critical approaches of feminist and womanist religious ethics.

HONS 381.02: Becoming American
Prof. Matthew Cressler For Honors Students Section 002 (MW 02:00- 03:15) MYBK 320
& Prof. Shari Rabin

What is America? What does it mean to be "American?" How does one "become" American? These questions rest at the heart of some of the most popular and provocative debates in the history of the United States, questions ultimately about what binds a nation together and what defines the boundaries of citizenship. This course will engage with these questions from the vantage points of three communities - African Americans, Catholics, and Jews - which have been characterized at different times as outsiders and as the epitome of the American Dream.

RELS 101.01/02: Approaches to Religion: In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, and the Substance of Faith
Prof. Zeff Bjerken No Prerequisites Section 001 (TR 09:25 – 10:40) ECTR 219
Section 002 (TR 12:15—01:30) ECTR 219

This course introduces students to American Christianity, to Indian Hinduism and to Tibetan Buddhism by focusing on their distinctive understandings of sacred place and pilgrimage. We will rely on texts that combine travel narrative, story telling and religious study, as well as films and images to gain insight into the sacred art, music, rituals, stories, and landscapes that inspire pilgrims. One of the fun things about this course is that we get to do some "traveling" across the United States through documentaries and films. After visiting many odd and fascinating roadside religious attractions in the US, we travel to the ancient and living city of Banaras in India. This sacred city will serve as a lens through which the worldview of Hindu pilgrims comes into focus. Finally we journey to Mt. Kailash in the Himalayas, regarded by Tibetan Buddhists as the central axis of the universe and a very powerful pilgrimage site. The goal of the course is to see these strange and wondrous places as an expression of the religious imagination, where believers have sought to give outward form to their religious experiences.

RELS 101.03/04: Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements
Prof. John Huddlestun No Prerequisites Section 003 (MWF 11:00 - 11:50) ECTR 219
Section 004 (MWF 12:00 - 12:50) ECTR 219

This course introduces the student to the academic study of religion through an examination of a particular theme in a handful of selected traditions. Following some discussion of the topic of religion and how to define it, we will focus on messiahs and messiah-like figures (and related movements) in three religious traditions: Judaism (setting the biblical foundation), Islam, and Buddhism (especially the Future Buddha Maitreya). Our examination of these will draw principally upon primary texts, along with some supplementary readings. The approach will be historical and more comparative as the course progresses, with some attention to various theories regarding failed messianic movements. The messiah theme provides an entry into many of the central ideas or concepts of each tradition; in this manner, the student should acquire some understanding of the basic tenets of each tradition and also an appreciation for its respective adherents.

RELS 101.05/06: Approaches to Religion: Sacred and Special Stuff

Prof Matthew Cressler **No Prerequisites** **Section 005 (TR 10:50 - 12:05)** **ECTR 103**
Section 006 (TR 01:40 – 02:55) **ECTR 103**

When we hear the word “religion,” the first thing that probably comes to mind is belief. But when we actually encounter religion in the world, we soon find ourselves face to face with lots of stuff: rosary beads and hijabs, gongs and incense, prayer shawls and peace pipes, amulets and daggers and dolls. This course will introduce students to the academic study of religion through an exploration of some of the *stuff* – meaning, physical objects and material culture – that is significant for Christians in the Americas, Muslims in Africa, and Buddhists in southeast Asia. And, in the process, we will consider one of the most central questions for religious studies: what makes some stuff special or “sacred.”

RELS 105.01: Introduction to World Religions

Prof Margaret Cormack **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (MWF 10:00 - 10:50)** **ECTR 116**

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the beliefs, practices, and history of the major religions of the world. We will approach each tradition impartially, studying its beliefs concerning divinity/ies, the universe, the place and obligations of human beings within that universe, the afterlife, and how these beliefs were represented in cultural artifacts – poetry, statues, temples, and sacred texts. We will consider how the beliefs developed and how they relate to the societies that adhere to them. You will learn how people from different cultures look at the world, and how to think critically and sympathetically about a variety of world-views.

RELS 105.02: Introduction to World Religions

Prof. June McDaniel **No Prerequisites** **Section 002 (TR 09:25 – 10:40)** **ECTR 103**

This course will introduce the beliefs and practices of a wide variety of world religions, including indigenous religions from Africa and the Pacific, and shamanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Shinto, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam. We will also include data on atheism and several New Religious Movements. There are no prerequisites, and the class will require three tests, two papers, and attendance.

RELS 105.03/04: Introduction to World Religions

Prof. Louise Doire **No Prerequisites** **Section 003 (MWF 12:00 – 12:50)** **ECTR 103**
Section 004 (MWF 01:00 – 01:50) **ECTR 103**

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion and of the world's major religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our study will include examination of the historical development, sacred text, ritual, concepts of the divine, and soteriology of each tradition.

RELS 115.01: Religion and Society: Religion & Society in India & Tibet

Prof. Zeff Bjerken **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (TR 05:30 - 06:45)** **ECTR 219**

This course is an introduction to two Asian religious traditions, Hinduism and Buddhism, and how they have shaped the societies of India and Tibet. The course will survey forms of social organization (e.g. the caste system, religious hierarchies, the status of women, monastic life), and the practices and beliefs of Hindus and Buddhists, including their origin myths, life cycle rituals, and their ethical norms. In particular we will examine the religious and political reforms of Mahatma Gandhi and the Dalai Lama, two of the most important leaders of the twentieth century. The non-violent ideals of Gandhi and the Dalai Lama present us with an alternative to our modern consumer-oriented technological culture, where people seek what they are programmed to seek. This course will really encourage you to “**Think Different**,” as the Apple computer advertisements that once featured both Gandhi and the Dalai Lama put it.

RELS 120.02: Religion, Art and Culture: Music and Religion in American Culture

Prof. Courtney Tepera **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (TR 03:05- 04:20)** **ECTR 103**

For several hundred years, American musicians and theologians have asked why the devil should have all the best music. This course will explore that question by listening to, reading about, and discussing sacred and secular music throughout American history. We will look deeply at what is deemed sacred and what is deemed demonic or profane in American music, from Puritan psalm-singing to the Rolling Stones' "Sympathy for the Devil." In doing so, this course will help students understand how religion penetrates American society and how people experience the sacred

and sublime in both music and religion. This course will help students become critical consumers of pop culture as we analyze, appreciate, and articulate deeper meanings in mass forms of entertainment.

RELS 220.01: Comparative Religious Ethics

Prof. Louise Doire **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (MW 04:00- 05:15)** **ECTR 219**

In Comparative Religious Ethics students will explore and examine the nature of various religious ethical traditions and how these ethical perspectives are grounded in text, culture and tradition. In this course we will utilize a narrative approach-both ancient and contemporary myths and stories- as the point of departure for the study of the ethical traditions of Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. We will also consider the critical approaches of feminist and womanist religious ethics.

RELS 225.01: The Jewish Tradition

Prof. John Huddlestun **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (MW 04:00 – 05:15)** **ECTR 103**

This course provides a window into the history, institutions, rituals, and beliefs of Jewish tradition, from its biblical foundations (Abraham, Moses, Ezra) to the modern State of Israel (the problem and politics of Jewish identity). Topics to be discussed include Rabbinic Judaism and the classic texts that emerged from it (Mishnah, Talmud, Midrash, etc.), the central role of study and debate in Jewish tradition, Jewish philosophy and mysticism, the emergence of non-Orthodox movements (Reform, Conservative, Reconstructionist, etc.), Zionism, the American Jewish experience, women and Judaism, Holocaust, and the modern State of Israel.

RELS 260.01: Native American Religions

Prof. Lee Irwin **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (MWF 09:00-- 09:50)** **ECTR 219**
Section 002 (MWF 10:00 – 10:50) **ECTR 219**

This course is designed to introduce students to Native American religions of North America and to discuss the consequences of invasion and the oppression of the native way of life. We will survey four representative native traditions: Mesoamerica (Maya and Aztec), Ani Yun'wiya (Cherokee), and Diné (Navajo). We will study these traditions in terms of the general history of discovery, settlement, warfare, federal control, land loss, and reservation life in the present. In each religious tradition, we will discuss cosmology, rituals, belief in spirits, life after death, sacred stories, symbols, the importance of place and land, with a brief review of the ethnohistory of each community. We will also discuss several Pan-Indian traditions: peyote, ghost dance, spiritual ecology, native theology, and review some laws passed in the 20th century with regard to Native American religious freedom.

RELS 298.01/ENVT 352: Special Topics: “The Spirit of Sustainability”

Prof. Todd LeVasseur **No Prerequisites** **Section 001 (MWF 11:00 -- 11:50)** **ECTR 103**

This course examines sustainability from the context of religious ethics and spiritual activism. It explores the current ecocrisis, its sources and the social and environmental impacts of the ecocrisis, and then analyzes various responses from religious institutions and spiritual leaders to the ecocrisis. Attention will be paid to how religious and spiritual visionaries and leaders are advocating for structural and behavioral changes, couched in the language of religious ethics and inter-species justice, geared towards generating resilient, sustainable communities of place. Classes will be a mix of lectures, videos, and group discussion, with possible field trips and guest lectures from local sustainability activists.

RELS 298.02: Special Topics: Goddesses in World Religions

Prof. June McDaniel **No Prerequisites** **Section 002 (TR 01:40 -- 02:55)** **ECTR 219**

In this course, we will look at the roles that goddesses have played in the history of religions. We shall include goddesses from indigenous and tribal religions, figures like Wisdom, Lilith and the Shekinah in Judaism, the Christian figures of Sophia, Virgin Mary and Mary Magdalene, female Sufi saints, goddesses of the Ancient Near East (including Egypt and Babylon) and Greece and Rome, Hinduism, Buddhism and Daoism. The class will also examine some modern alternative religious movements which have goddesses or divinized female founders. We shall study goddess rituals, myth and symbol, poetry, and sacred dramas, and the problems of the loss of the divine feminine in the modern, secular West. There will be three tests, one paper, and one group presentation.

RELS 335.01: Western Esotericism**Prof. Lee Irwin 1 RELS Course as Prerequisite Section 001 (MW 02:00 -- 03:15) ECTR 219**

This is an advanced survey course on Western Esotericism covering the following topics in a roughly historical order: Pythagoreanism, Hermeticism, Kabbalah, Grail, Alchemy, Rosicrucians & Masons, Esoteric Christianity, and contemporary, esoteric groups. The learning strategy is to provide a general overview of each area and to show the interconnections in a general pattern of historical development, including some of the problematic aspects of studying esotericism. The goal of the course is to provide students with an overview of the development and complexity of Western Esoteric traditions apart from mainstream religious teachings or institutions. We will not be studying normative Christianity, Judaism or Islam but esoteric traditions or schools that have developed in relation to these mainstream traditions, often in circumstances of oppression or institutional persecution. We will examine why these traditions have been persecuted and why they often have secret rites and an underground history. At the end of the course, we will consider the new popularity of esotericism and its impact on New Religious Movements. Prerequisite: Either three semester hours in Religious Studies or permission of the instructor.

RELS 450.01: Senior Seminar: Spirituality**Prof. Elijah Siegler For Seniors-210 & 9 credit hours in RELS as Prerequisite****Section 001 (TR 12:15 - 01:30) MYBK 119**

How does one study spirituality? Where does it come from? Why do so many people say they are “spiritual but not religious”? What is spirituality anyway? This class will be an investigation of spirituality through the lenses of phenomenology, history, and critical theory. We will be looking at a variety of examples, mostly from the United States, including in depth studies of Oprah Winfrey and the National Park Service. We will also spend 24 hours at spiritual retreat center in Myrtle Beach. Students will research and present papers in their own area of interest. This class will be conducted as a seminar, modeled on those found at graduate programs in religious studies. Students are expected to actively participate in discussion including serving at least once as discussion leader, and once as recording secretary.

2016 MAYMESTER - SUMMER I - SUMMER II

CRN	Maymester (May 16 – May 31)					
30055	RELS 105.01	Introduction to World Religions	LeVasseur	MTWRF	1:00- 4:30	ECTR 103
30221	RELS 280.01	Religion & Film: Saint Joan Goes to Hollywood	Doire	MTWRF	8:30- 12:00	ECTR 219
Summer I (June 3 – July 2)						
30815	RELS 298.02	Special Topic: Nature Spirituality, Ecotopia, and Applied Ecovillage Living	LeVasseur	MTWRF	10:00- 11:45	ECTR 103
30279	RELS 298.01	Special Topic: Encountering Religions and Globalization in the Indian Himalaya	Bjerken	India		India
30279	INTL 290/ ENVT 352	International Development & Environmental Justice in the Himalaya	Taylor	India		India
Summer II (July 7 – Aug 5)						
30842	RELS 105.02	Introduction to World Religions	LeVasseur	MTWRF	10:00- 11:45	ECTR 103
30909	RELS 105.03	Introduction to World Religions	Schadler		Online	Online

Maymester 2016 (May 16- May 31)

RELS 105-001: Introduction to World Religions

Prof. Todd LeVasseur No Prerequisites Section 001 (MTWRF 1:00– 4:30) ECTR 103

This course is designed to introduce CofC students to the more popular religions (in terms of adherents) of the globe. By utilizing a comparative and historical approach, the course investigates the origin and flourishing of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course also briefly covers some of the key theorists in religious studies, and ends by looking at religion in today’s globalized world. The class consists of lectures, reading and discussing sacred texts, videos, and discussing how and why religion is a driving force behind contemporary social and political issues.

RELS 280-001: Religion & Film: Saint Joan Goes to Hollywood

Prof. Louise Doire No Prerequisites Section 001 (MTWRF 8:30- 12:00) ECTR 219

In this course students will explore the pervasive presence of religious themes in film including representations of female saints and sinners, and interpretations of redemption, God, self-sacrifice and the human condition. We will view and discuss films that are obvious in their portrayal of religious subjects such as *Joan of Arc*, *The Mission*, *The Last Temptation of Christ* and films that are not so obvious (*The Fisher King*). Other themes include Latin American Liberation Theology, Mary Magdalene in early Christianity and the medieval legend of Percival, the Green Knight and the quest for the Holy Grail.

SUMMER I 2016 (June 3- July 2)

RELS 298-001: Special Topics: Nature Spirituality, Ecotopia, and Applied Ecovillage Living

Prof. Todd LeVasseur No Prerequisites Section 001 (MTWRF 10:00 - 11:45) ECTR 103

Ever wondered what an “Ecovillage” is, or what it is like to create and live in one? This course explores how ecovillages help human communities live more sustainably by incorporating ecocentric values, ecological design, and environmentally friendly technologies. This Summer I course will meet on campus for the first week, and then will spend one week living in residency at Earthaven Ecovillage in Black Mountain, NC, outside of Asheville. Students will live on-site for 1 week, participating in hands-on learning modules about permaculture, organic farming, alternative building construction, nature spirituality, alternative energy, and other aspects of sustainable homesteading in the Appalachian mountains

Study Abroad Trip to North India (June 1 – June 28)

This study abroad program immerses students in the Himalayan culture of North India, and students will learn about environmental change, local and refugee political communities, and the religious diversity of Ladakh and Dharamsala. Although Ladakh’s rugged high desert landscape is so sparsely populated that it is often described in travel literature as “isolated,” it has actually been a crossroads for the transmission of goods and religions (including Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Christianity) for at least a thousand years. Today Ladakh is undergoing rapid social change and a “renaissance” of sorts, due in part to the rapid influx of western adventure and spiritual tourists.

The first part of the program will take place in Leh, the political, religious, and tourist hub of Ladakh, which is an exciting laboratory for examining the cross-cultural encounter of western travelers, Indian tourists, Tibetan exiles, and local Ladakhis. We then travel to Dharamsala, the current home of the Dalai Lama and the seat of the Tibetan government in exile, where we will meet with Tibetan refugees and community leaders. Finally, we spend the last few days in India's capital of Delhi, where we will visit some of India's largest modern religious institutions, including the Bahai Lotus Temple, the Hare Krishna Temple, and the Jama Masjid.

RELS 298-002: Special Topics: Encountering Religions and Globalization in the Indian Himalaya
Prof. Zeff Bjerken No Prerequisites Section 001 India

This course introduces students to the religious diversity present in Ladakh and Dharamsala, where Buddhists, Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, and Jews all encounter each other. We will examine how globalization affects this encounter, and explore various responses to globalization including the clash of civilizations, interreligious dialogue, and how religious institutions have responded to global tourism and cosmopolitanism. We will learn how various agents—tourists, missionaries, immigrants—carry religious ideas and practices, and how macro-processes such as economic development, militarization, and religious modernization, impact the local religious landscape in the Himalayas. The class will include site visits in Ladakh to Buddhist monasteries and schools, Hindu temples, Islamic mosques, a Sikh gurdwara, a Moravian Missionary Church, Yoga and Ayurvedic healing centers, and in Delhi we will visit a Bahai temple and Hindu Hare Krishna temple.

AND

INTL 290/ENVT 352: International Development & Environmental Justice in the Himalaya
Prof. Amberjade Taylor No Prerequisites Section 001 India

This course provides an overview of the key concepts, major drivers, and practical workings of international development, and introduces students to specific environmental rights issues in the Himalaya region. We'll investigate how globalization, voluntourism, and infrastructure projects impact local communities, including refugees and marginalized groups. We'll examine responses to natural disasters and ongoing water and land use issues, and develop strategies to analyse and critique the systems and power relationships of "international development." This course is built around two case studies: in Ladakh (post-2010 cloudburst and resulting humanitarian response), and in Dharamsala (daily life water and land for Tibetan refugees, Indian residents, and Western tourists). Students will participate in unique experiential learning activities related to these case studies, including narrative power analyses, field observation and ethnographic reflection, and digital media-making. Students will also discover how advocacy for environmental justice is shaped by class, caste, gender, and religious identities.

SUMMER II 2016 (July 7- August 5)

RELS 105-002: Introduction to World Religions

Prof. Todd LeVasseur No Prerequisites Section 001 (MTWRF 8:30- 12:00) ECTR 103

This course is designed to introduce CofC students to the more popular religions (in terms of adherents) of the globe. By utilizing a comparative and historical approach, the course investigates the origin and flourishing of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course also briefly covers some of the key theorists in religious studies, and ends by looking at religion in today's globalized world. The class consists of lectures, reading and discussing sacred texts, videos, and discussing how and why religion is a driving force behind contemporary social and political issues.

RELS 105-003: Introduction to World Religions

Prof. Peter Schadler No Prerequisites Section 003 (online only) online only

The goal of this course is to introduce you to the beliefs, practices, and history of the major religions of the world. We will approach each tradition impartially, studying its beliefs concerning divinity/ies, the universe, the place and obligations of human beings within that universe, the afterlife, and how these beliefs were represented in cultural artifacts – poetry, statues, temples, and sacred texts. We will consider how the beliefs developed and how they relate to the societies that adhere to them. You will learn how people from different cultures look at the world, and how to think critically and sympathetically about a variety of world-views.