

The College of Charleston

Religious Studies Department Spring 2017 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 February 10, 2017**. 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
- 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
- 8) RELS 451: Capstone Colloquium (1 Credit Hour)
- 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 which must include:

- 1) RELS 101 or 105
- 2) One of: RELS 225, 230, 235, 240, 245 or 248
- 3) One of: RELS 201, 202, 205 or 310 (note: 310 cannot be used to satisfy both the sacred text course requirements and the one additional course at the 300-level or above requirements)
- 4) One course from RELS 300-499, not including 451
- 5) 2 Additional Courses.

CRN	Course	Title	Instructor	Day	Time		Building	Room
21201	HONS381.01	Value & Tradition in Asian Religions	Bjerken	MW	2:00	3:15	MYBK	320
23465	HONS381.05	Values and Science of Sustainable Agriculture	LeVasseur/ Prichard	T	1:40	4:20	TBA	
21895	FYSE134.01	Origins: The History of Religion	Doire	MWF	9:00	9:50	ECTR	219
20922	RELS101.01	Approaches to Religion - Life After Death	Irwin	TR	9:25	10:40	ECTR	118
21598	RELS101.02	Approaches to Religion- Messiahs & Messianic Movements	Huddlestun	MW	2:00	3:15	ECTR	103
20923	RELS101.03	Approaches to Religion - Messiahs & Messianic Movements	Huddlestun	MW	3:25	4:40	ECTR	103
21830	RELS101.04	Approaches to Religion- Religion and Terrorism	Gallagher	TR	12:15	1:30	ECTR	219
20924	RELS105.01	Intro to World Religions	McDaniel	MWF	10:00	10:50	ECTR	103
20925	RELS105.02	Intro to World Religions	McDaniel	MWF	11:00	11:50	ECTR	103
20926	RELS105.03	Intro to World Religions	Tepera	TR	3:05	4:20	ECTR	103
23481	RELS105.04	Intro to World Religions	Cormack	MWF	12:00	12:50	ECTR	103
23483	RELS105.05	Intro to World Religions	Cormack	MWF	1:00	1:50	ECTR	103
21200	RELS115.01	Religion and Society: Black Nationalism and Religion	Cressler	MWF	11:00	11:50	ECTR	219
23471	RELS202.01	New Testament: History and Interpretation	Huddlestun	TR	5:30	6:45	ECTR	219
21441	RELS210.01	Theories in Study of Religions	Cressler	MW	2:00	3:15	ECTR	219
23468	RELS215.01	Religion & Globalization	Gallagher	TR	3:05	4:20	ECTR	219
23469	RELS240.01	Buddhist Traditions	Bjerken	TR	8:00	9:15	ECTR	219
23470	RELS240.02	Buddhist Traditions	Bjerken	TR	10:50	12:05	ECTR	219
21831	RELS250.01	Religion in America	Siegler	TR	10:50	12:05	ECTR	103
22172	RELS298.01	Special Topics: Altered States of Consciousness	Irwin	TR	12:15	1:30	ECTR	103
23472	RELS298.02	Miracles, Monks and Magic: Christian Life in the Middle Ages	Cormack	MWF	10:00	10:50	ECTR	219
23473	RELS301.01	Mysticism and Religious Experience	McDaniel	MWF	1:00	1:50	ECTR	219
23392	RELS315.01	New Religious Movements	Siegler	TR	1:40	2:55	MYBK	119
21600	RELS451.01	Capstone Colloquium	Siegler	M	4:00	4:50	MYBK	119

HONS 381.01: Value & Tradition in Asian Religions**Prof. Zeff Bjerken For HONS Students****Section 001 (MW 02:00 – 03:15)****MYBK 320**

This course will explore the visions, values, and practices that motivate the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism and Christianity, which have formed the civilizations of South and East Asia. The course is designed around major conceptual themes, including discerning between illusion and reality; meditation and the diversity of religious experiences; pilgrimage and spiritual journeys; death, the afterlife, and ancestor worship; religion, gender and sexuality; monasticism, asceticism and the hermit's life; the transformation of foreign traditions to fit native worldviews; and the effects of modernization on religions today. We will also watch a number of contemporary films that explore the conflicts between tradition and modernity in contemporary cultures in Asia. The course will follow an easterly route, beginning in India and moving to China and Japan, at the same time as we move from ancient times down to the present day. We begin with the ancient Indian civilization that appeared some 3,000 years ago and end with religious debates over the topics of abortion and organ transplant in Japan today. The course will call into question our common distinctions between self and society, church and state, and religion and spirituality.

HONS 381.05: Values and Science of Sustainable Agriculture**Prof. Todd LeVasseur and Seth Pritchard For HONS Students Section 005 (T 01:40 – 04:20) TBA**

This course is an interdisciplinary investigation into the technology of domesticated plant and animal species that began with the Agricultural Revolution 10,000 years ago. Students will explore cultural values and narratives that inform farming practices of the Agricultural Revolution, through the current Green Revolution of industrial farming, while learning how this type of food procurement is contributing to many environmental and social justice issues, ranging from farm worker labor rights to issues of gender equality to issues of environmental justice. Students will then explore cultural values and narratives devoted to supporting a variety of alternative sustainable agricultures. These include permaculture, organic, biodynamic, and traditional ecological knowledge, with this exploration situated within insights from contemporary ecological agrarianism. In addition to exploring cultural and value-based aspects of food production systems, we will also delve into the biology of food production systems with a particular interest in elucidating the relationships between agricultural inputs (fertilizers, biocides), mechanization, soil carbon management, biodiversity, water quality and global biogeochemistry. This element of the course will help students understand the environmental metrics behind whether certain farming practices are sustainable or not.

FYSE 134.01: Origins: The History of Religion**Prof. Louise Doire For Freshmen****Section 001 (MWF 09:00 – 09:50)****ECTR 219**

This course is designed to be an introduction to the study of religion and the origins of the world's major religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. The course will focus on the historical development of these traditions and may also include a study of sacred text, ritual and concepts of the divine.

RELS 101.001: Approaches to Religion: Life After Death**Prof. Lee Irwin No Prerequisites****Section 001 (TR 09:25 - 10:40) ECTR 118**

This course is a comparative introduction to religion organized around the theme of death, soul concepts, and a variety of beliefs about life after death. In terms of culture areas, the theme will be internationalized by looking at a variety of model cultures: ancient Mediterranean religions; Judaism and Christianity in Europe and America; Islam in the Middle East; Hinduism and Buddhism in India and Daoist and Confucian beliefs in China. The organization of the course starts with the culture areas and examine attitudes and religious beliefs in life after death among the religions of the world – this portion of the course will emphasize theories in comparative religions. In Christianity we will look at an esoteric Christian writer on sacred cosmology and in Buddhism we will discuss a book by a famous Tibetan Buddhist leader on after death processes. Toward the end of the course, we examine current research on life after death, in relation to a variety of studies linked to scientific investigation of post-mortem life independent of theories in religion or philosophy.

RELS 101.002/03: Approaches to Religion: Messiahs & Messianic Movements**Prof John Huddlestun No Prerequisites****Section 002 (MW 2:00 - 03:15)****ECTR 103****Section 003 (MW 3:25 – 4:40)****ECTR 103**

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 101.004: Approaches to Religion: Religion and Terrorism**Prof. Eugene Gallagher****No Prerequisites****Section 004 (TR 12:15 - 1:30)****ECTR 219**

This course provides an introduction to the academic study of religion by focusing on the multiple relations between religion and terrorism. We will first establish provisional definitions, or at least tentative characterizations, of both “religion” and “terrorism.” Though each of those phenomena might seem to be easily identified, we will find that, in fact, things are much more complicated. We will continue to refine those definitions throughout the semester. Equipped with those preliminary characterizations, we will describe, analyze, and interpret a selection of case studies taken from different times, cultures, and social and political contexts, which along the way will introduce students to Japanese Buddhism, evangelical Christianity, and Wahhabi Islam.

RELS 105.01/02: Introduction to World Religions**Prof June McDaniel****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (MWF 10:00 - 10:50)****ECTR 103****Section 002 (MWF 11:00 - 11:50)****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: Introduction to World Religions**Prof Courtney Tepera****No Prerequisites****Section 003 (TR 03:05 - 04:20)****ECTR 103**

This course provides a basic introduction to prominent religious traditions and how they have impacted the world around them. We will focus primarily on Buddhism, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Yoruba. These religions will be studied as cultural phenomena and repositories of knowledge to better understand the interaction of religion and culture in the modern world.

RELS 105.04/05: Introduction to World Religions**Prof Margaret Cormack****No Prerequisites****Section 004 (MWF 12:00 - 12:50)****ECTR 103****Section 005 (MWF 01:00 – 01:50)****ECTR 103**

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 115.01: Religion and Society: Black Nationalism and Religion**Prof Matthew Cressler****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (MWF 11:00 - 11:50)****ECTR 219**

This course will introduce students to religious ideas and practices from across the African diaspora that gave rise to the African American political tradition known as “black nationalism.” In popular American memory black nationalists—whose philosophies and tactics range from cultural pride to armed self-defense, from economic self-determination to political independence—are usually associated with “Black Power” and imagined as the secular alternative to religious civil rights activists. This course challenges this image and situates Black Power in the long black nationalist tradition, a tradition with deep religious roots. Students will be introduced to the concept of “nationalism” and its relationship with its modern conceptual counterpart “religion.”

RELS 202.01: New Testament: History and Interpretation**Prof. John Huddlestun****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (TR 05:30 - 06:45)****ECTR 219**

This course examines that group of documents known collectively in Christian tradition as the New Testament. In addition to generous readings from the biblical text, we will examine selected extra-biblical documents (Jewish and Greco-Roman) designed to situate the early Christian canonical writings in their pristine historical, religious, and social contexts. Topics discussed include textual criticism, canon formation, sources within the gospel tradition, the quest for the historical Jesus, messianic movements, and the apocalyptic genre. Particular attention will be devoted to: (1) the position of early Christianity as one among a number of Jewish sects in the diverse religious world of first-century Palestine, and (2) the contentious debate over the requirements for gentile (non-Jewish) entry into the fledgling Jewish-Christian community as reflected in the writings of Paul.

RELS 210.01: Theories in the Study of Religions**Prof. Matthew Cressler****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (MW 02:00 - 03:15)****ECTR 219**

As a theoretical introduction to the academic study of religion, this course surveys a number of important debates in the history of religious studies, such as the insider/outsider problem, definitions of religion, theories on the origins of religion, the comparison of religions, and religion's psychological, sociological and political functions.

RELS 215.01: Religion and Globalization**Prof. Eugene Gallagher****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (TR 03:05 - 04:20)****ECTR 219**

This course focuses on various dimensions of the contemporary globalization of religion. In its first section it will provide a basic orientation to the descriptive and analytical concepts of "religion" and "globalization" as they are used in current academic and popular discourse. In its second section, it will concentrate on three case studies that will treat aspects of Christianity, Islam, and Hinduism in the contemporary world.

RELS 240.01/02: Buddhist Traditions**Prof. Zeff Bjerken****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (TR 08:00 - 09:15)****ECTR 219****Section 002 (TR 10:50 - 12:05)****ECTR 219**

It's time to wake up! This course will survey the traditions that derive from the teachings of the Buddha, the "Awakened One." A number of enduring themes will be explored that pertain to Buddhist philosophy (e.g. Nirvana and the status of the self), Buddhist practices (e.g. meditation and monastic life), and politics and society (e.g. Buddhist kingship, women and Buddhism). We will trace the transformation of Buddhism from India into Thailand, China, Tibet, and into America today. Buddhism is a tradition of great complexity whose dimensions evolved to answer the needs of people of different historical periods and cultures. We'll rely extensively on primary Buddhist texts, but we'll also read two books (a spiritual travelogue and a novel) about western seekers of enlightenment. We also will watch documentary films that illustrate how Buddhist ideas and practices are woven into many aspects of daily life in Asia.

RELS 250.01: Religions of America**Prof. Elijah Siegler****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (TR 10:50 - 12:05)****ECTR 103**

This course will cover American religious history from the sixteenth century until today, including the religions of Native Americans, Puritans, Southern slaves and slave-owners, evangelicals, Jews, Catholics, Mormons, and many others. Students will learn how religion in America intersects with politics, culture and race. Students will have the opportunity to learn about the religions of the Charleston area and to explore their families' religious history.

RELS 298.01: Special Topics: Altered States of Consciousness**Prof. Lee Irwin****No Prerequisites****Section 001 (TR 12:15 - 01:30)****ECTR 103**Cross listed with **PSYC 315 with Jennifer Wright**

This course will be an interdisciplinary survey of research on altered states of consciousness. The course is team taught and will review material from the perspectives of religious studies and psychology. Specifically, we'll examine how different disciplines understand altered states of consciousness—what they are, their diversity and origins, how they are achieved, and their potential value to human life. We will explore the role of altered states of consciousness in a variety of religious and mystical practices, in transpersonal theory, and in daily life practices. We will investigate such topics as mind and selfhood, life and death, paranormal abilities, and the boundaries of exceptional human experience. We will also analyze the potential power of consciousness to generate an increased awareness and desire to heal ourselves and the world, as well as how activities of consciousness, such as meditation, are important transformative forms of social action.

RELS 298.02: Special Topics: Miracles, Monks and Magic: Christian Life in the Middle Ages**Prof. Margaret Cormack****No Prerequisites****Section 002 (MWF 10:00 - 10:50)****ECTR 219**

For medieval Christians in western Europe, the world was inhabited not just by their neighbors and farm and wild animals, but also by a variety of spiritual beings – angels, saints, and demons - who could influence their lives for good or ill. In this course, we will examine the religious beliefs and practices of Western European Christians in the period ca. 1100-1450. We will consider what their churches looked like, inside and out; what a church service sounded like; how people obtained religious knowledge, and how they practiced it; the life-stages they went through; what changed if they became a priest or joined a monastery. We will consider pilgrimage, heresy, trial by ordeal, the position of women and how Christians interacted with Jews, Muslims, magicians, healers, heretics and spiritual beings. No prior knowledge required – only enthusiasm for the above topics!

RELS 301.01: Mysticism and Religious Experience**Prof. June McDaniel****3 Credit Hours****Section 001 (MWF 01:00 - 01:50)****ECTR 219**

The Mysticism and Religious Experience class will explore the esoteric core of the world's religions, their mystical doctrines, rituals, and states of love and unity with the Divine. There will be films and guest speakers, and we shall go on a brief

contemplative retreat. The topics will include the ancient Greek and Egyptian mysteries, Kabbalah, Catholic and Orthodox mystics, Sufism, several forms of Hindu and Buddhist mystical techniques, Qi and China, and indigenous forms of mystical practice, including trance and possession. There will be two tests, two papers, and one group presentation.

RELS 315.01: New Religious Movements

Prof. Elijah Siegler 3 Credit Hours

Section 001 (TR 01:40 - 02:55) MYBK 119

New Religious Movements (NRMs) are often better known as “cults.” What are they? Where do they come from? This course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of NRMs. The first half of the class looks at NRMs in the West as historical and cultural phenomena. The second half explores NRMs around the world, emphasizing issues of political and social change and globalization. Specific topics to be covered include the Anti-Cult Movement, the “brainwashing” hypothesis, the occult and the New Age, and NRMs that derive from Islam (like al-Qaeda) and Chinese religion (like Falun Gong).

RELS 451.01: Capstone Colloquium

Prof. Elijah Siegler For Seniors-210, 450 & 1 other RELS

Section 001 (M 02:00 - 02:50) MYBK 119

This *required* course is designed to provide a *capstone experience* for majors in Religious Studies, and it will feature visits from RELS faculty and recent alumni as guest speakers. The Colloquium is not another course on the subject of religion, but a “meta-course” that will provide RELS students with an opportunity to reflect on the cumulative achievement of their studies and consider how they might apply their knowledge and skills in their future professional lives.

The Colloquium is designed to give students, in the company of other majors, the opportunity to: 1) review their own study of religion at CofC in order to identify their distinctive interests in particular subjects; 2) write an intellectual autobiography; 3) evaluate how their training served as a bridge between other academic disciplines; and 4) grasp how the study of religion might prepare them to put their learning to work in the world.