

Religious Studies Course Offerings

FALL

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
001	Kenny Smith	100% Asynchronous Online
002	Kenny Smith	100% Asynchronous Online
003	Kenny Smith	M W F 8:30-9:20am
004	Yohong Roh	9:30-10:20am
005	Yohong Roh	10:30-11:20am
006	Yohong Roh	12:30-1:20pm
007	Claire Hautot	T Th 4:30-5:50pm
008	Claire Hautot	T Th 6:00-7:20pm

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). Students will examine the New Testament writings, along with historical issues like the emergence of Christianity from Judaism in the Greco-Roman world. Students will also become familiar with the historical-critical methods that scholars use to 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	Delbert Burkett	50-75% Online Asynchronous
002	Bradley K. Storin	T Th 9:00-10:20am

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REL 2000: WHAT IS RELIGION?

What is a “religion,” how do you study it, and who gets to decide? We will explore these fundamental questions by reading three very different textbooks commonly used in introductory courses like this. We will think about how these types of books, the approaches of their authors, and even this type of course shape the concept of "religion" among the general public. While we will touch on the doctrinal and ritual dimensions of several global traditions, our task will be to figure out and articulate the assumptions, values, and goals that shape our thinking about “religions” (and other stuff!). In this course, I assume that we are all curious—curious about how we think, curious about what we normalize or take for granted, curious about how we use words to describe and navigate the world around us. **This is an Integrative Learning Core (ILC) course that awards general education credit.**

Section	Instructor	Time
001	Lauren Horn Griffin	100% Asynchronous Online

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

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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 1:30-2:20pm
002	Madhuri Yadlapati	T Th 12:00-1:20pm

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 3010: RELIGION AND AI

This course examines digital hyperconnectivity (with a focus on machine learning and artificial intelligence) through a social theory lens. The first unit will investigate the history of information overload and fears of technology with attention to the history of AI in particular. The rest of the course is split into three units: AI and the self, AI and culture, and AI and politics. The first unit looks at how AI impacts self-monitoring, the second unit explores what happens when culture becomes content (focusing specifically on algorithmic culture and AI marketing) and the final unit investigates how hyperconnectivity fosters both populism and its seeming antithesis, technocracy.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Lauren Horn Griffin	T 4:30-7:20pm

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

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REL 4050: HISTORY OF GOD

This course explores a significant dimension of religion: belief in a divine being or beings. It is focused on, but not limited to, conceptions of divine beings in Western civilization. From a historical perspective, we trace early conceptions of the gods from animism to polytheism to Jewish monotheism. From a literary perspective, we consider God as a character in the Hebrew Bible, using Jack Miles's Pulitzer-Prize-winning study *God: A Biography*. Turning to Greek traditions, we consider the god of Greek philosophy and Hellenistic conceptions of the divine human. We consider how Christian belief in Jesus as God developed into the concept of the Christian Trinity. From philosophical and scientific perspectives, we consider arguments for and against the existence of God. From a modern perspective, we consider the "death" of God in the thought of writers such as Feuerbach and Freud. In contemporary developments, we consider the rebirth of the goddess in goddess-centered religions. In contemporary literature, we read Franco Ferrucci's novel *The Life of God (as told by Himself)*. We also view the Carl Reiner film "Oh, God!" starring George Burns as God.

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

REL/HIST 4161: HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE US

This course is a chronological and thematic survey of American religious history, with special consideration for the diversity of religion in the United States. The course begins with the European colonization of the Americas and moves through topics such as the Great Awakenings, slave religions, Mormonism, Native American religions, fundamentalism, Roman Catholicism, and Judaism, as well as new immigrant religions like Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam. Students will learn how religious groups influenced and were influenced by American culture. An assortment of reading materials, writing assignments, and creative projects will allow students to engage a variety of religious issues and understand the significance and relevance of religion in the history of the United States.

Section #	Instructor	Time
001	Lauren Horn Griffin	T Th 10:30-11:50am

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REL/HIST 4505: THE RISE OF CHRISTIANITY

This course covers the history, literature, and thought of Christianity from its beginnings in first-century Palestine to its establishment as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the sixth century (the period known as “late antiquity”). Through a close reading of ancient sources and scholarly literature, we examine the lives of several important Christians and topics central to nascent Christian traditions (e.g., martyrdom, monasticism, ritual diversity, Christian art and architecture, theological controversies, and ecclesiastical institutionalization).

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

Religious Studies Faculty Directory



Maria Rethelyi

Ph.D., University of Chicago

Modern European Judaism

112 Coates Hall



Yohong Roh

Ph.D., Temple University

East Asian Buddhism

231 Coates Hall



Lauren Horn Griffin

Ph.D., University of California, Santa Barbara

Religion, Media, Tech, & Nationalism

109 Coates Hall



Stuart Irvine

Ph.D., Emory University

Old Testament & Ancient Israelite Literature

114 Coates Hall



Bradley K. Storin

Ph.D., Indiana University

History of Christianity

113 Coates Hall



Madhuri Yadlapati

Ph.D., Yale University

World Religions & Modern Religious Thought

105 Coates Hall



Claire Hautot

ABD., University of Chicago

American Religion & the Neoconfederacy

105 Coates Hall



Delbert Burkett

Ph.D., Duke University

New Testament & Christian Origins

123 Coates Hall



Kenny Smith

Ph.D., Emory University

American Religion, New Religious Movements, & Alternative Spiritualities

122 Coates Hall



Michael Pasquier

Ph.D., Florida State University

American Catholicism & Religion in the U.S. South

210A Coates Hall

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**