

**DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION
SECOND SEMESTER, 2022-2023
COURSE OFFERINGS**

REL 101-01

INTRODUCTION TO THEOLOGY

Does Christianity sanction the status quo or is it an instrument of transformation? Is Jesus a personal savior or an agent of liberation? If the Church reflects the society of which it is a part, how can it be an agent for a just order? Are women victims in our social order? Does Christianity contribute to our environmental crisis or its resolution? If God becomes male does male become God? Should the Church have same-sex marriage ceremonies? Is the death penalty racist?

**MWF 11:30 – 12:20 4 Credits G.E. Req. U/P David Woodyard
(Cross listed with QS 281-01) (Enrollment Limited by Quota)
FYS 14; SO 14**

REL 103-01

WORLD RELIGIONS

Studying religious traditions—both your own and those of others—is some of the most important work you will do in your college career. Religious ideas and practices have had a profound impact on world history, global development, and their effect continues to be seen and felt today. To be an educated citizen, we must both understand the basics of a variety of religious traditions and appreciate the vast diversity within a religious tradition. We must also learn to engage in personal risk-taking and respectfully discuss our own religious ideas.

**MWF 8:30 – 9:20 4 Credits G.E. Req. U/P Jue Liang
(Fulfills a Global Commerce requirement) (Enrollment Limited by Quota: SO 14; FYS 14)**

REL 108-01

BIBLE, GENDER, AND SEXUALITY

This course is an introduction to the various and often conflicting ways in which gender and sexuality are represented in biblical texts as well as the range of interpretations of these texts over time. In this course, we will read ancient texts alongside contemporary theories of gender and sexuality. On the one hand, we will consider how biblical texts have been used to construct categories of "normal" and "natural" gender and sexuality and, on the other, how they might be read to undermine or subvert these frameworks. In addition to historically contextualizing ideas about gender and sexuality within biblical texts, we will also address contemporary uses of the Bible in public debates.

**MWF 10:30 – 11:20 4 Credits G.E. Req. U/P Kelsi Morrison-Atkins
(Cross-Listed with WGST 108-01/QS 108-01)**

REL 109-01

INTRODUCTION TO AMERICAN RELIGIONS

This course examines American religions from the pre-colonial period to the present. Recognizing the uniquely prominent role religion has played in American society, we approach “American Religions” as a category to understand the relationship between religious belonging and marginalization in American society. This necessitates that our study revolves around important social themes such as race, class, gender, nationalism/xenophobia, sexuality, disability and ecology. These social themes will be incorporated into our learning of American religious diversity and models of religious pluralism in American society. Students will gain an awareness of the breadth of American religious experiences while approaching larger questions about the distinctions between, and overlap in, American and religious identities.

**MWF 9:30 – 10:20 4 Credits G.E. Req. U Trad Nogueira-Godsey
(Enrollment Limited by Quota)
FYS 14; SO 14**

REL 200-01

THINKING ABOUT RELIGION

What makes religion ‘religion’? Why does one study religion in the academic context? This course is designed for current and prospective majors and minors to critically explore the various approaches to Religion as an academic discipline, but also as a category of human activity and experience. Students will have the opportunity to examine diverse theories and methods in religious and theological studies, to raise critical questions regarding the relationship between religion and society/culture, and to develop their own understanding of what “counts” as religion/religious.

**TR 1:30 – 2:50 4 Credits G.E. Req. U/W Jue Liang
(6 seats are reserved for Religion majors and minors)**

REL 205-01

RELIGION AND NATURE

An investigation of the religious value of nature in Christianity and Buddhism, particularly in America and Japan. We look at how people in these cultures have viewed the place of humanity within the world of nature, and the relationships among humanity, God and nature.

**TR 10:00 – 11:20 4 Credits G.E. Req. U/ENVS CDIH Adam Fix
(cross-listed with ENVS 205-01) No FYS**

REL 215-01 **HINDUISM: MYTHS, EPICS, AND NARRATIVES**

In this course, we will encounter the core narratives from the corpus of Hindu religious literature, including works of various genres and media (among them mythology, poetry, dramaturgy, story literature, and fiction). In reading these stories, we will gain not only a broad familiarity with the idioms of Indian narrative literature, but also a deeper appreciation for the non-dogmatic, quotidian, and metaphorical dimensions of Hinduism and of religion more generally. By untangling stories that have penetrated virtually all levels of Hindu civilization and can be traced from the Vedic period to Indian society today, we will query the specific role narrative plays in constructing religious as well as cultural identities.

TR **3:00 – 4:20** **4 Credits** **G.E. Req. U** **Jue Liang**
(cross-listed with INTL 250-09) **No FYS**

REL 240-01 **RELIGION AND CIVIL DISTURBANCE IN AMERICA**

The scholar of religion, Jonathan Z. Smith once described religion “a distinctive mode of human creativity, a creativity which both discovers limits and creates limits for human existence.” With focus on civil disturbances in America, this course explores the role of religion as creating limits for human existence that oppress, as well as religion’s role in discovering injustice in those limits and providing powerful tools that can be used variously and creatively to challenge and change them. By taking instances of civil disturbance as our starting point, we will consider the role of religion in establishing peace, sometimes at the cost of justice, as well as the role of religion in organizing movements for justice. The emergence of liberation theology within Black and Latin Christianities, The Nation of Islam, and even secular movements for racial, gender, economic and ecological justice make use of this distinctive mode of human creativity to create purpose and order from the chaos and alienation caused by systemic and systematic oppression. Our primary objective will be to understand instances of civil disturbance, such as the aftermath of the murder of George Floyd, within a broader context social justice and investigate the religious elements of social injustice and in organizing and theologizing for justice.

TR **3:00 – 4:20** **4 Credits** **G.E. Req. U** **Trad Nogueira-Godsey**

REL 240-02 **JEWS, CHRISTIANS, AND MUSLIMS: READING AND WRITING THEMSELVES**

This course examines the writings of Jews, Christians, and Muslims as they reflect on their own identity. We will read spiritual memoirs with an eye toward the ways in which members of these diverse traditions have made sense of their lives, grappled with both shared and unique social issues, and expressed their faith in the lifestyles they chose to lead. Through a critical examination of their stories we will grapple with the construction of religion in modernity, the relationship of religious and national identity, and the shape of religious formation and belonging in modern life.

MW **1:30 – 2:50** **4 Credits** **G.E. Req. U** **Bethany Slater**

REL 301-01 **EMPIRE: IS AMERICA THE NEW ROME?**

Is America called by God to use its power to make things right in the world? Does the first-century struggle with empire have a parallel in the twenty-first century? Is empire imbedded in an American ideology? What is the connection between religion, violence, and terrorism? Is the global economic order a form of terrorism? How are class, race, and gender related to empire?

MWF **1:30 – 2:20** **4 Credits** **G.E. Req. U/P** **David Woodyard**
(Enrollment Limited by Quota: SR 5; JR 6; SO 5; FYS 2)

REL 340-01 **ISLAM AND AMERICAN EMPIRE**

This course explores Islamic encounters with “Pax Americana” and how Islamic faith and identity have responded to American hegemonies of power and influence. Our study begins with Islam’s arrival to slave plantations in the Americas. From here, we will explore various expressions of Islamic faith and novel constructions of Islamic identity in response to American cultural, economic, political and military domination, both domestically and globally. These include American Islamic identities in the fight for civil rights, the courting of Islamic states during the Cold War, the “War on Terror,” American Islamophobia and the Arab Spring revolutions of the early 2010s. While exploring historical encounters, we will pay special attention to the various and evolving perceptions of what the terms “Islam” and “America” represent and for whom. Students will learn how religious identities are shaped by cultural, economic, political and military expressions of power, but also how religious identity and faith can work to challenge those same expressions of power.

TR **10:00 – 11:20** **4 Credits** **G.E. Req. U** **Trad Nogueira-Godsey**
(Cross-listed with MENA 350-01) **No FYS**

REL 340-02 **SACRED TEXTS AND SOCIAL JUSTICE**

From Women’s Suffrage to Black Lives Matter, biblical texts, ideas, and ideals have played a significant role in movements and struggles for equity and justice in the United States. In this course, we will consider the role that sacred texts play in movements for social change, analyze how ideas about the Bible—and the Bible as an idea—are invoked in public discourse, and evaluate the rhetorical and interpretive moves by which the same sets of texts could be invoked to maintain the status quo or transform relations of power. This course will discuss historical movements for social change in the United States, but will focus primarily on movements for anti-racism and reproductive justice in the 21st century.

MWF **12:30 – 1:20** **4 Credits** **G.E. Req. U** **Kelsi Morrison-Atkins**
(Cross-listed with BLST 345-01) **No FYS**
