

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

The Religious Studies curriculum presents a critical inquiry into the religious dimension of human experience. After an introduction to the nature of religion and the methods employed in its study, students can select from a variety of courses exploring specific topics such as sacred texts, issues in sexual ethics, questions of life and death, and the wide variety of devotions and practices that animate religious communities.

The study of religion allows for an informed appreciation of the motivations and values given expression in religious belief, and the way in which culture shapes, and is shaped by, that belief. Students may take courses offered by the Religious Studies Department as part of the required core curriculum, as electives, or as part of a major or minor program in religious studies under the direction of a departmental advisor.

Majors and minors in Religious Studies are eligible for induction to Theta Alpha Kappa, the national honor society for religious studies and theology. In addition, each year the department honors the academic achievement of an outstanding senior with the Mary Irene Gallagher Theology Medal, Fairfield's oldest academic award.

Core Curriculum Options

Area III of the core curriculum requires students to take a minimum of two religious studies courses. All students must take RS 0101 Exploring Religion. Students may then select a 200-level course based on their interests, keeping in mind that it may not be a second section of RS 0101. A third course in religious studies, at the 200 or 300 level, may also be chosen to complete the five-course requirement of Area III.

Programs

- Religious Studies Major (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-major>)
- Religious Studies Minor (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor>)
- Religion in America Minor (<https://catalog.fairfield.edu/undergraduate/arts-sciences/religious-studies/religion-united-states-minor>)

Students interested in a minor, a major, or a double major should contact the religious studies department chair.

Courses

RS 0101 Exploring Religion (Shell) 3 Credits

This course invites students to explore the religious dimensions of human experience, emphasizing the themes of scripture, community and practice. In a critical appraisal of one or more of the great religious traditions of the world, students will analyze sacred texts in context, discover how social patterns shape religious communities, and survey a wide variety of religious devotions and practices, both personal and communal. Students in this course will learn to investigate the religious lives, beliefs, experiences and values of others, in their scope and diversity, respecting both the differences from, and the similarities to, their own. While several sections of the course will offer a variety of lenses for such a critical understanding, all sections will inquire about the relationship between religion and culture, employing the tools of the humanities and the social sciences. See RS 0101A, RS 0101B, RS 0101C, RS 0101D, RS 0101E.

RS 0101A Exploring Religion: Religion and the Critical Mind 3 Credits

This subsection of RS 0101 examines some of the themes in the study of religion and offers a comparative analysis of the nature, function, and purpose of religion as found in a variety of models of religion. A wide variety of contemporary religious practices will serve as discussion points for scholarly analysis.

RS 0101B Exploring Religion: Asian Religions 3 Credits

Attributes: WDIV World Diversity

This subsection of RS 0101 examines the basic religious systems of India and China, including their fundamental differences, performative functions, and worldviews. The course evaluates Euro-American theories of religion in light of Asian religious expressions.

RS 0101C Exploring Religion: Common Questions, Traditional Response 3 Credits

Attributes: JST Judaic Studies Minor

This subsection of RS 0101 examines the major questions addressed by most world religions, with special emphasis on how they are answered in a specific major tradition. Topics include the nature of the sacred and its relationship to human persons; the problem of evil and innocent suffering; religion's call for social responsibility; and the nature and function of ritual.

RS 0101D Exploring Religion: Religion in a Comparative Key 3 Credits

This subsection of RS 0101 examines different kinds of religious experience, doctrine, and practice through a close examination of two different religious traditions, engaging the traditions as these appear in a variety of cultural contexts.

RS 0101E Exploring Religion: Peoples of the Book, Sacred Texts, and Their Communities 3 Credits

Attributes: JST Judaic Studies Minor

This subsection of RS 0101 examines the relationship between sacred text and the historical communities of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Focusing on shared narratives, such as Adam and Eve in the Garden, the course illustrates the different ways that texts are interpreted and the various roles that Scripture plays in these communities.

RS 0201 Hebrew Bible/Old Testament**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course will survey the texts that are normative for Judaism and Christianity today; the Hebrew Bible (TaNaKh) and the Christian Old Testament. These texts will be studied according to a wide range of modern methods of biblical criticism which consider carefully their literary and historical aspects. Special effort will be made to situate these texts within their historical and cultural setting in the ancient near east.

RS 0205 Women in the Bible**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines stories about women that appear in both Jewish and Christian Scriptures by applying various methodological approaches. Conventional methods of interpretation, namely literary and historical-critical, will be used and critiqued. While the focus will be on images of women in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament (viz., the Jewish TaNaKh and the Christian Scriptures), other non-canonical stories about women will also be considered. This course does not presume any previous knowledge of the biblical texts themselves or biblical methodology.

RS 0207 Prophetic and Apocalyptic Voices**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course studies the major prophetic voices of the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, concentrating on each prophet's unique vision of God and of the requirements of justice. The course blends these themes with the later apocalyptic consciousness, which demands rectification of the wrongs of hatred and injustice, and offers hope for a better future.

RS 0209 Jewish Interpretations of Scriptures**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course explores ways in which Jews have understood the Hebrew Bible from the first centuries of the Common Era through today. Focusing on specific biblical texts, the course draws interpretations from early classical, legal, and non-legal rabbinic material; medieval commentaries and codes; mystical literature; and modern literary, theological sources.

RS 0210 Introduction to Judaism**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines ways in which Judaism has been defined and has developed as both a way of thought and a way of life. Included will be discussions of central Jewish concepts (e.g., covenant, holiness, and commandment), holidays, life-cycle ceremonies, and contemporary Jewish religious movements.

RS 0211 History of the Jewish Experience**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

The course examines the origin and development of Judaism and the Jewish people. It begins with the Hebrew Bible as the source of Judaism and follows its development to the modern era. This overview introduces the Jewish religion, its history, and development.

RS 0213 Jews and Judaism in America**3 Credits****Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, ASUP American Studies Upper Level, JST Judaic Studies Minor, UDIV U.S. Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

What has it meant and what does it mean today to be a Jew in America? Viewing Judaism and Jewishness as inseparable from one another, Jews remain a distinct though by no means homogeneous religious and ethnic group in American society. This course explores the religious, cultural, social, economic, and political diversity among American Jews as well as distinctive beliefs, concerns, and experiences that continue to unite them. The course gives special attention to issues concerning immigration, acculturation, gender, and Black-Jewish relations.

RS 0215 Women in Judaism**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines ways in which women have understood and experienced Judaism from the Biblical period through the present, drawing on historical writings, novels, theological essays, and films and giving particular attention to the traditional religious roles and status of women, the many ways in which women have understood Jewish self-identity, and recent feminist efforts to re-evaluate and transform contemporary Jewish life.

RS 0218 Faith After the Holocaust**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, PJST Peace and Justice Studies**Prerequisites:** RS 0101.

This course explores the complexity and horror of the holocaust and its contemporary historical, social, political, and theological implications. What historically made the attempted annihilation of European Jewry possible and how were some Jews able to survive? Was the holocaust unique? Could it have been prevented? What impact did it have on Western faith in humanity and God? What lessons, particularly in light of the resurgence of anti-semitism in Europe today, can it teach us?

RS 0220 Writings of Paul**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the texts and recurring themes of the writings attributed to Paul, with particular emphasis on Paul's treatment of ethical situations, community, and religious experience.

RS 0221 Good News of the Gospels**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John according to contemporary exegetical and literary methodologies. The course examines and compares the theological positions of early Christianity as represented by each writer and by other early Christian gospels.

RS 0222 Writings of John**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the text of the gospel and epistles attributed to John, placing particular emphasis upon the recurring themes in these writings, the distinctive view of Christianity they represent, and the development of early Christianity to which they witness.

RS 0228 Early Christianity**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course presents a historical overview of early Christianity between the end of the first century and the close of the sixth. The focus of the course is on the institutional and theological development of the early Church after the final books of the New Testament were written. Topics examined include: Jesus and Judaism, Christianity and the Roman Empire, heresies of the Early Church, and the development of Christian theology (in particular the doctrines of Christ and the Trinity).

RS 0230 Introduction to Catholicism**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This introduction to the beliefs, doctrines, ideas, and practices that shape the unity and diversity of the Catholic tradition explores theological, devotional, and spiritual forms of expression in their historical and cultural contexts in order to appreciate the particularity of Catholic themes. The course also considers how these themes engage contemporary Catholic life and exercise an influence on the wider culture.

RS 0231 The Problem of God**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This historical and theological examination of the Christian doctrine of God pays special attention to the problematic aspects of the development of this doctrine through the ages, exploring this development in biblical sources; patristic, medieval, Reformation, and modern times. The course concludes with a consideration of the challenge of post-Enlightenment atheism and of the efforts of contemporary theologians to recast the classical conception of God.

RS 0232 Jesus Christ: Yesterday and Today**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

A systematic treatment of the person and work of Jesus Christ, this course examines different interpretations of the meaning of the Christ event from the scriptural sources to contemporary developments.

RS 0235 Liberation Theology**3 Credits**

Attributes: BSAH Black Studies: Arts and Humanities, BSCC Black Studies Component Course, CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, HASM Humanitarian Action Minor Skills/Method Course, LCEL LACS Minor: Elective, UDIV U.S. Diversity

Prerequisite: RS 0101.

This course analyzes contemporary theological movements that emphasize the relationship of religious faith and praxis to the sociopolitical realm. The course treats at length the development of the Latin American theology of liberation and examines its theological principles, tracing the influence of this theological outlook on other Third World theologies and on North American and European theological reflection. The course proceeds to a constructive proposal for a contemporary political theology.

RS 0236 Christian Feminist Theology**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, UDIV U.S. Diversity, WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

Participants examine some of the key issues being raised in religion by contemporary feminist thinkers. After a brief examination of the history of patriarchy in the Christian tradition and earlier responses by pre-modern feminists, the course considers issues such as feminist methodology, feminist perspectives on traditional Christian doctrines of God, creation, anthropology, Christology, and eschatology. The course concludes with a discussion of the nature of authority and an examination of a feminist theology.

RS 0238 Evil**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course explores the problem of evil from the perspectives of theology and philosophy. The course considers God and evil, classical theodicies (reasonable justifications of God before the prevalence of evil), modern philosophical accounts of evil, social evil, and the possibility of belief in the face of evil. Within the context of these subjects, the course addresses the following questions: What is evil? What are the roots of evil? What effect does one's understanding of evil have on one's understanding of the human being, of God, and of religion? What is our responsibility in the face of evil?

RS 0239 Last Things: The Catholic Belief in Life After Death**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course first explores the Christian understanding of life after death, affirmed in such beliefs as the resurrection of the body, the last judgment, heaven and hell, and the forgiveness of sins. It then goes on to examine the Catholic tradition's particular contributions to these beliefs in its teachings on purgatory and the communion of the saints. The course asks why these ancient beliefs continue to resonate in contemporary popular culture, and examines modern theological efforts to re-construct these hopeful beliefs for our own times.

RS 0240 The Medieval Church**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course surveys the development of Christianity in medieval Western Europe through the lens of the Western/Latin Church. It presents a broad history of the social, political and religious aspects of the Church as found in a variety of primary sources: mystical and theological writings, hagiographical literature and rules for monastic communities, and official Church documents. Through these sources students are introduced to the critical analysis of primary texts (dating from c. 300-1500) by giving proper attention to the social and cultural context in which they were written. Topics discussed in this course include: monasticism, the rise of papal power, the First Crusade, and the development of cathedrals and universities.

RS 0241 Encountering God in Medieval Christian Thought 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course presents a historical overview of religious thought in the medieval era (c. 500-1500), with a focus on the institutional and theological developments within Christian monasteries and universities. We will first treat the development of Benedictine monasticism and the types of theological literature associated with the monasteries, before looking at the development of the University system in Western Europe and the types of theology produced in the schools. Finally, we will treat the pervasive presence of "mystical theologians" who were often neither monks nor university professors, but developed a rich theology grounded in human experience.

RS 0244 Finding God in All Things: The Spiritual Legacy of Ignatius of Loyola 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

The course aims at a deeper understanding of the origins, development, and present forms of Ignatian spirituality. Students are invited to study in an open yet critical fashion: the life and history of Ignatius of Loyola; the founding and development of the Society of Jesus; the historical context of the major themes of Jesuit spirituality and ways in which these have been worked out in history; strengths, weaknesses, and potential lacunae of this particular charism in the church; its relevance to contemporary spiritual needs, especially in the context of university life; its potential for nurturing lives characterized by love for others and justice for the world. Students are also exposed to the dynamics of the Spiritual Exercises; a variety of prayer forms developed by Ignatius; and a service learning project. The course culminates in a creative project designed by each student.

RS 0245 The Reformation Era 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

Participants study the religious reform of the 16th century. The course begins by probing the seeds of reform in the late scholastic tradition and in popular spirituality, and proceeds by tracing the development of the ideas and impact of the reformers: Luther, Zwingli, Calvin, Munzer, and Schwenckfeld. The course concludes with an investigation of the Roman Catholic response to reform in the events of the Council of Trent and the Counterreformation.

RS 0248 Faith and Reason: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition 3 Credits**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course leads students to an understanding of the characteristically Catholic ways of engaging the world intellectually. The course examines key ideas of symbol, analogy and sacrament, and central Catholic motifs such as theology as "faith seeking understanding," the synthesis of faith and reason and the peculiarly Catholic expression of Christian humanism, as expressed in the work of Catholic philosophers and intellectuals. It attends to feminist and non-Western critiques of the tradition, to Catholicism's approach to some contemporary social problems, and to some examples of the role of the Catholic imagination in the arts.

RS 0249 American Catholic Theologians 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, ASUP American Studies Upper Level, CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This lecture/reading course gives students insight into the modern development of Catholic theology in America and what makes it specifically American. Discussion/analysis covers the work of Gustav Weigel, John Courtney Murray, George Tavard, Frank Sheed, Walter Burghardt, and Robley Whitson.

RS 0250 Contemporary Morality: Basic Questions 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course introduces the fundamental concepts in moral theology, drawing on major traditions in contemporary Christian thought. The course examines the moral foundations of conscience, freedom and responsibility, virtue and character, and methods of moral decision-making. To deepen the study of basic questions in Christian morality, the course concludes by examining selected applied issues in contemporary morality.

RS 0252 Contemporary Moral Problems 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, EDCG Educational Studies Cognate**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This theological examination of contemporary moral problems considers selected ethical issues in contemporary society and leading approaches to moral decision-making. The course investigates moral problems such as euthanasia and physician-assisted suicide, the death penalty, violence and just war theory, bioethics, sexual and reproductive ethics, global poverty, environmental ethics, and issues in business and legal ethics.

RS 0253 The Morality of Marriage in Christian Perspective 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course explores marital commitments by exploring the many phases of partnership - courtship, marriage, intimacy, parenting, death - and the specialized skills or virtues these phases require. The course considers questions such as: What kinds of communities, especially faith communities, support marital commitments? What are the forces of society and culture that might threaten them? How might vices, such as physical or sexual abuse, alcoholism, and addiction, erode commitments? The course concludes by assessing how virtuous families might promote peace and justice, and developing an integrated theological account of the moral project we call marriage.

RS 0255 Catholic Social Teaching 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, PJST Peace and Justice Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the modern teachings of the Catholic Church on peace and justice; Christian/humanist attitudes towards war; pacifism and the just war theory; and changes in global political and economic structures that seem necessary to ensure a peaceful and just world order.

RS 0257 Christian Spirituality 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the foundations and elements of a spirituality of everyday life from a lay perspective. It considers issues related to the spirituality of university life and to one's broader, future developmental calling on personal, spiritual, and professional levels. Themes of the course include historical overview of Christian spiritual traditions; key theological foundations such as creation, incarnation, doctrine of the Holy Spirit, grace, priesthood of all believers, action, and contemplation; exploration of the practical implications of such a spirituality; and reflection on action for justice.

RS 0260 Religion in the United States 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, UDIV U.S. Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course explores the story of religion in America from a multicultural, multi-faith perspective. Students will examine how different religious peoples and traditions have interacted across time and how these interactions and exchanges have both complicated and enriched the American religious landscape. Much attention will be paid to those voices often left out of the master narrative of American religion for reason of race, gender, ethnicity, class, or even peculiarity. The course is a survey, thus students will encounter a variety of topics varying from indigenous religious practices, revivalism, the early roots of traditions like Judaism and Islam, new religious movements, to secularization.

RS 0262 Afro-Caribbean and African American Religions: Shout, O Children! 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, BSAH Black Studies: Arts and Humanities, BSFC Black Studies Focus Course, UDIV U.S. Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the evolution and innovation of the religions of African people as they were shaped through the middle passage, merged with other religions during the institution of slavery, and created anew on the American continent and throughout the Caribbean Sea. Students will examine how Caribbean traditions like Vodou and Santeria and American iterations of Christianity and Islam arose out of and against institutions and cultures that sought to subjugate them. Further, students will explore how elements of black religious life, from preaching style to music to liturgy to religious thought, have left an indelible mark upon American and Caribbean religious cultures and traditions.

RS 0263 New Religious Movements in America 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASUP American Studies Upper Level**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines new religious movements, more pejoratively known as "cults," and their schismatic cousin "sects," on their own terms and in their American context. Students examine multiple religious traditions, including those born and grown in the United States, as well as those imported from outside the United States. Among those traditions studied are the Church of Latter-day Saints, the Theosophical Society, the Branch Davidians, and Scientology. Throughout the course, students seek to answer the following questions: why do new religious traditions arise, how do they thrive, and does the context of American culture have anything to do with their success or failure?

RS 0267 Mormonism: An American Church 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

Who are the Mormons? This course seeks to answer this very question. Beginning with the birth of its prophet Joseph Smith and proceeding into Mormon life in the 21st century, the course traces the history of Mormonism as it moved from millennial religious movement to formal Church. We will examine the scripture, beliefs, practices, and mission of Mormonism and how they function within the church and within the Mormon community. We will also explore the paradox of Mormonism's controversial reputation and its popularity, examining how Mormons have combatted negative perceptions and adapted in order to survive – and, ultimately, thrive.

RS 0268 American Catholic History 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course traces the development of American Catholicism from its origins through the extraordinary 19th century expansion to the point today at which 22% of U.S. citizens are Catholic. We will examine how Catholics fared before they had priests or sacramental ministry, how the early church developed in the age of Enlightenment Catholicism, what happened to transform the church during the years of European immigration, and how Catholics struggled for acceptance. We end by tracing the present day decline of cultural Catholicism, the assimilation of Catholics into mainstream American culture and the increasing Latinization of the church.

RS 0270 Introduction to Islam 3 Credits**Attributes:** WDIV World Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course introduces Islam as a global religion and civilization. After a brief historical overview, the course focuses on the foundational concepts of Islam - Quran, Prophet, Ritual and Community, and then analyzes how these concepts are interpreted in the main intellectual traditions, in the ways that Islam is practiced in different cultures and in the works of modern thinkers.

RS 0273 Islamic Ethical and Legal Thought 3 Credits**Attributes:** WDIV World Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course examines the different ways that ethical and legal thought have been formulated and practiced within Islam. Students will gain a basic understanding of Islamic law and the legal schools associated with it. The nature of Muslim ethics will be explored in a number of complementary and competing discourses including the law, Muslim philosophy, Sufism, theology, and political theory. Students will analyze pre-modern and modern case studies. Topics to be discussed include governance, war, sex, and biomedical ethics. Our readings will consist of primary sources in translation and current secondary literature.

RS 0275 Islam in America 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, ASUP American Studies Upper Level, UDIV U.S. Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course is a survey of Muslim life and religious movements connected to Islam in North America. The course traces the history of Islam on the continent from the Atlantic slave trade to the post-9/11 era. We will investigate the many ways in which Islam, as both a religion and idea, has appeared on the American horizon and in the American imagination. The historic diversity of Muslim communities on the continent will be explored through their respective beliefs, cultures, and sense of identity. Special attention will be paid to the African-American and Immigrant Muslim communities.

RS 0276 Islamic Theology 3 Credits**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course is a survey of major tenets of Muslim belief, points of difference, and schools of theological thought. We will explore important points of faith and investigate the debates that have emerged over the course of Islamic history. Special attention will be paid to the areas of doctrinal formulation, scholastic theology and mystical thought. Our primary readings will consist of both primary sources in translation and current secondary literature.

RS 0280 Hinduism**3 Credits****Attributes:** WDIV World Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course introduces the seminal texts, concepts, and images of the major religious tradition of India. Topics include Vedic ritualism; Upanishadic mysticism; yoga meditation; the Bhagavad Gita; the caste system; Vedanta philosophy; the cults of Rama, Krishna, Shiva, and the Goddess; and Gandhi's philosophy of non-violent action. The course views Hinduism as a historical phenomenon, a formative influence on Indian culture and society, and a response to the human condition.

RS 0285 Buddhism**3 Credits****Attributes:** WDIV World Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course explores the Indian Buddhist tradition, from its beginning in the life of Shakyamuni Buddha through the present revival of neo-Buddhism in the activism of oppressed classes. The course considers the early formative ideas of the Buddha - the Awakened One - as they unfold in the course of Indian history and society, and discusses Buddhist meditation and philosophy as procedures devised to elicit the awakened state. Using written and visual works, the course examines developments in Buddhist religious orders, lay social life, and the rise of the Great Vehicle tradition. Art and archaeology provide a context for Buddhism's compelling missionary activity throughout Central and Southeast Asia.

RS 0286 Buddhism in the United States**3 Credits****Attributes:** UDIV U.S. Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

This course will explore the history, sources and forms of Buddhism that have prospered in the United States since the mid 19th century, with the emigration of Chinese to California. Subsequent developments will also be examined: Pure land, beat zen, hippie Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, and emigrant communities from Japan, China and Southeast Asia among others. The "two communities" model (impoverished emigrant vs. wealthy convert Buddhism) will be explored. Visits to Buddhist centers in the Northeast will be part of the program, and if possible, visits from Buddhist representatives to the class. Film, literature and other media will inform the course as well.

RS 0289 Tantrism**3 Credits****Attributes:** WDIV World Diversity**Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

The course covers the medieval formation of tantrism, a pan-Indian approach to religion that was to develop separate but related subcultures in Buddhism, Hinduism, and Jainism. With its ability to sacralize formulations of power and sexuality, it went on to become the most widely spread form of Buddhism, with premodern forms found in Tibet, China, Japan, and Eastern Europe. Recent expressions have been found all over the world. The course examines questions of tantrism's medieval origins, its espousal of antinomian conduct, its geographical spread, attempts at its domestication, and its recent developments in India and abroad.

RS 0299 Special Topics (Shell)**3 Credits****Prerequisite:** RS 0101.

Students and faculty in this course will engage in an in-depth exploration of a significant topic in the field of Religious Studies. The content will vary in successive offerings of this course, depending on the professor. The course may be repeated with the consent of the professor.

RS 0300 Second Temple Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level Religious Studies course.

The Dead Sea Scrolls have rightly been called the greatest manuscript discovery of the twentieth century. Discovered in 1947, they have made a tremendous impact on how scholars today understand Judaism and Christianity in antiquity. Our examination of the community, texts, and archeology of the Dead Sea Scrolls will begin with a study of the Second Temple Period (520 BCE-70 CE), one of the most important in the history of Judaism. This course will examine the political, social, and theological developments of this period so that the community of the Dead Sea Scrolls and their writings may be situated within their proper context. Students will learn to read primary texts closely and secondary texts critically as they consider the influence and relationship between texts and their community.

RS 0315 Modern Jewish Theology**3 Credits****Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level religious studies course.

This course explores ways in which Jews have sought to know God. While Judaism has long maintained that ultimately God is unknowable, divine and human action, reason, revelation, mystical insight, and prayer are among the paths taken by Jews to gain theological knowledge. Included will be a discussion of works by several 19th- through 21st c. theologians (e.g., Buber, Baeck, Rosenzweig, Heschel, Fackenheim, Greenberg, Plaskow) in drawing on these paths and in discussing such topics as the nature of the divine covenant, the role of human autonomy, liturgical images of God, and faith after Auschwitz.

RS 0325 Quest for the Historical Jesus**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level religious studies course.

This course examines the increasingly public debate over whether an adequate basis exists for reconstructing a description of the life of Jesus of Nazareth. It examines the evidence available from all sources, the criteria by which that evidence has been interpreted, and the resulting, often contradictory, portrayals. The course also discusses the relationship between this "historical Jesus" and the subsequent faith tradition of Christianity.

RS 0343 The Papacy**3 Credits****Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, ISIF Italian Studies: Italy-Focused**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level religious studies course.

This survey of the Roman Catholic papacy, generally focuses on a single figure, theme, or period, and places that figure, theme, or period within the larger historical, cultural, and ecclesial context. A significant part of the course treats theological issues, using as texts either papal writings, significant encyclicals, or conciliar statements and actions. The course also includes a critical assessment of the role of the papacy within the Roman Catholic Church and a consideration of the role of the papacy in interreligious dialogue and world affairs.

RS 0350 The Classic: Truth in Religion and the Arts**3 Credits****Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level religious studies course.

This course examines the idea of the classic as a model for establishing relationships between religious language on the one hand, and poetic discourse and artistic expression on the other. What truth do classics lay claim to and how do they embody it? The course compares secular and religious classics before investigating the value of the classic model in the process of doing theology.

RS 0354 Saints and Sinners: Images of Holiness in Contemporary Fiction 3 Credits**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level religious studies course.

This course examines the complexity of current understandings of what it is to be holy. It begins with a brief consideration of traditional models of holiness. It turns next to several influential theories of spiritual growth, and then, in the light of these theories, looks at a series of 20th-century novels that examine the idea of holiness. Authors vary but include Georges Bernanos, Shusaku Endo, Mary Gordon, Graham Greene, David Lodge, Flannery O'Connor, Gloria Naylor, Muriel Spark, and Jean Sullivan.

RS 0360 I'm Spiritual, Not Religious: The American Spiritual Tradition 3 Credits**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, ASUP American Studies Upper Level**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level religious studies course.

This course examines a strand of anti-institutionalism in American religion, one, which has culminated in the increasingly popular and ubiquitous phrase, "I'm spiritual, but not religious." The claim to spirituality, but not to religiosity, has a rich history in the United States context, beginning in the earliest periods of European settlement. In this course, students will investigate the evolution of this thoroughly American phenomenon across U.S. history and through the examples of spiritual Americans. Students will consider whether the phrase, "I'm spiritual, but not religious," though often intended as a statement of one's separateness from religious institutions, has become the marker of a distinctive religious affiliation.

RS 0363 Religious Values in Film 3 Credits**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level Religious Studies course.

This course focuses on the search for meaning in human life as experienced and depicted in 12 films by distinguished filmmakers. The first six films mirror this search in personal life, asking in various ways whether we are isolated and alone or linked and dependent on others. They also grapple with the problem of evil and the experience of salvation. The second six films concern themselves with the meaning of life in society. In different historical contexts they ask whether the universe is indifferent or friendly to our community building, and raise the problem of God and the religious significance of secular achievement.

RS 0379 Islam, Race, Power 3 Credits**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level Religious Studies course.

Students will undertake a critical investigation of "race" and "ethnicity" within Islam from the classical period to the present. The course examines how different Muslims approached the concepts as well as how those concepts were applied to or imposed upon particular Muslim communities. The historical experience of Black Muslims serves as a recurring case study. Moreover, the relationship of race to power is also a central analytical theme. Topics to be discussed include the construction of "race," slavery and its abolition, the Blackamerican Muslim experience, and Muslim theologies of liberation and resistance. The course is research and writing intensive.

RS 0398 Independent Study 1-3 Credits**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level Religious Studies course.

Students, in consultation with a department director, define their course of study.

RS 0399 Religious Studies Seminar 3 Credits**Prerequisites:** RS 0101 and one 200-level Religious Studies course.

This seminar offers an in-depth investigation of a significant figure, issue, or problem in religious studies. Enrollment requires the permission of the instructor.

Faculty**Professors**

Davidson
Lakeland
Thiel
Umansky

Associate Professors

Dallavalle
Hannafey, S.J.
Hardy, C. (Visiting)
Nguyen
Slotemaker, *chair*

Assistant Professors

Willsky-Ciollo

Lecturers

Cosacchi
Gaines
McGinley
Prosnit
Ranstrom
Tunney
Sauers
Sozek

Professors Emeriti

Benney
Dreyer
Humphrey
Lang