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

The Orientation Level of the Magis core curriculum requires students to take an introductory course in Religious Studies, which can be any course at the 1000 level.

At the Exploration Level (2000-level courses), students must choose two further courses in two separate departments, selected from History, Philosophy, or Religious Studies. As such, students may select a 2000-level course in Religious Studies to fulfill part of the exploration-level requirement.

### Programs

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

### Courses

**RLST 1001 Religion and the Critical Mind**

**Attributes:** RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

This course 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. Previously RS 0101A.

**RLST 1002 Common Questions, Traditional Response**

**Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

This course 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. Previously RS 0101C.

**RLST 1003 Religion in a Comparative Key**

**Attributes:** RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

This course 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. Previously RS 0101D.

**RLST 1004 Peoples of the Book, Sacred Texts, and Their Communities**

**Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

This course 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. Previously RS 0101E.

**RLST 1101 Introduction to Judaism**

**Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

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. Previously RS 0100.

**RLST 1111 History of the Jewish Experience**

**Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

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. Previously RS 0211.

**RLST 1201 Hebrew Bible/Old Testament**

**Attributes:** JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

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. Previously RS 0201.

**RLST 1270 Qur’an as Scripture and Experience**

**Attributes:** RSTH RS Theology Pathway

This course provides students with an introductory survey to the Islamic scripture of the Qur’an, its socio-historical context, and its ongoing legacy within the wider Muslim world. Through close readings of the Qur’an and religious accounts of the Prophet Muhammad’s life, students will explore the nature of revelation and prophetic authority in Islam. Furthermore, students will critically examine the nature of interpretation and the problems of authoritiveness, recognizing the importance of these issues for other religious traditions as well.
RLST 1402 Introduction to Catholicism  3 Credits
Attributes: CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway
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. Previously RS 0115.

RLST 1601 Religion in the United States  3 Credits
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. Previously RS 0106.

RLST 1667 Mormonism: An American Church  3 Credits
Attributes: ASRS American Studies: Religion, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway
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 combated negative perceptions and adapted in order to survive, and ultimately thrive. Previously RS 0267.

RLST 1701 Introduction to Islam  3 Credits
Attributes: IWHU Islamic World Studies: Humanities, RSTH RS Theology Pathway, WDIV World Diversity
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. Previously RS 0105.

RLST 1801 Asian Religions  3 Credits
Attributes: ANMC Asian Studies Elective, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, WDIV World Diversity
This course 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. Previously RS 0101B.

RLST 1802 Buddhism  3 Credits
Attributes: ANMC Asian Studies Elective, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, WDIV World Diversity
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. Previously RS 0188.

RLST 2099 Religious Studies Seminar  3 Credits
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
This seminar offers an in-depth investigation of a significant figure, issue, or problem in religious studies. Enrollment by permission only. Previously RS 0399.

RLST 2113 Jews and Judaism in America  3 Credits
Attributes: ASUP American Studies Upper Level, JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, UDIV U.S. Diversity
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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. Previously RS 0213.

RLST 2115 Women in Judaism  3 Credits
Attributes: JST Judaic Studies Minor, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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. Previously RS 0215.

RLST 2118 Faith after the Holocaust  3 Credits
Attributes: JST Judaic Studies Minor, PJST Peace and Justice Studies, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, RSTH RS Theology Pathway
Prerequisites: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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? Previously RS 0218.
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
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<td>RLST 2120</td>
<td>Modern Jewish Theology</td>
<td>3</td>
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**RLST 2150 Second Temple Judaism and the Dead Sea Scrolls** 3 Credits


**Prerequisite:** One 1000-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-Century theologians (e.g., Buber, Bauckh, 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. Previously RS 0315.


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RLST 2336 Christian Feminist Theology  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway, UDIV U.S. Diversity, WSGF Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies: Gender Focused  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0236.

RLST 2338 Evil  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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? Previously RS 0238.

RLST 2339 Last Things: Catholic Belief in Life After Death  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0239.

RLST 2428 Early Christianity  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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). Previously RS 0228.

RLST 2440 The Medieval Church  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, ISIC Italian Studies: Italy Component, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0240.

RLST 2441 Encountering God in Medieval Christian Thought  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0241.

RLST 2443 The Papacy  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, ISIF Italian Studies: Italy-Focused, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisites:** One 1000-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. Previously RS 0343.

RLST 2445 The Reformation Era  3 Credits  
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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, Müntzer, 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 Counter-Reformation. Previously RS 0245.
RLST 2448 Faith and Reason: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0248.

RLST 2544 Finding God in All Things 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0244.

RLST 2552 Contemporary Moral Problems 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, EDCG Educational Studies Cognate, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0252.

RLST 2555 Catholic Social Teaching 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, PJST Peace and Justice Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0255.

RLST 2557 Christian Spirituality 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0257.

RLST 2558 The Classic: Truth in Religion and the Arts 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-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. Previously RS 0258.

RLST 2559 Saints and Sinners: Images of Holiness in Contemporary Fiction 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-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. Previously RS 0259.

RLST 2649 American Catholic Theologians 3 Credits 
**Attributes:** ASRS American Studies: Religion, ASUP American Studies Upper Level, CARS Catholic Studies: Religious Studies, RSTH RS Theology Pathway  
**Prerequisite:** One 1000-level religious studies course.  
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. Previously RS 0249.
RLST 2660 I'm Spiritual, Not Religious: The American Spiritual Tradition

Attributes: ASRS American Studies: Religion, ASUP American Studies Upper Level, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, RSTH RS Theology Pathway

Prerequisite: One 1000-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. Previously RS 0360.

RLST 2662 Afro-Caribbean and African American Religions: Shout, O Children!


Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

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 African 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. Previously RS 0262.

RLST 2663 New Religious Movements in America

Attributes: ASUP American Studies Upper Level, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

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? Previously RS 0263.

RLST 2668 American Catholic History


Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

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. Previously RS 0268.

RLST 2669 Religion and the Civil Rights Movement

Attributes: RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway

Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

With a special emphasis on the public speeches and work of Martin Luther King, Jr., this course will consider the role black religious leaders, institutions, culture played in shaping the modern Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 60s. Previously RS 0269.

RLST 2730 Islamic Theology

Attributes: IWHU Islamic World Studies: Humanities, RSTH RS Theology Pathway

Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

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. Previously RS 0276.

RLST 2750 Islamic Ethical and Legal Thought

Attributes: IWHU Islamic World Studies: Humanities, RSTH RS Theology Pathway

Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

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 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. Previously RS 0273.

RLST 2760 Islam in America


Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.

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. Previously RS 0275.
RLST 2795 Islam, Race, Power 3 Credits
Attributes: IWHU Islamic World Studies: Humanities
Prerequisite: One 1000-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 Black American Muslim experience, and Muslim theologies of liberation and resistance. This course is research and writing intensive. Previously RS 0379.

RLST 2880 Hinduism 3 Credits
Attributes: ANMC Asian Studies Elective, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, WDIV World Diversity
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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. Previously RS 0280.

RLST 2883 Buddhist Spirituality 3 Credits
Attributes: ANMC Asian Studies Elective, WDIV World Diversity
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
The course explores the cultivation of meditation and spirituality in the Buddhist tradition, its embodiment in seminal figures in India, China, Japan, and Tibet, and their individual expressions of contemplation and spiritual experience. The association of these Buddhist saints with value systems, specific sites, and sacred activities is examined, especially as the relationships between these persons and their activity in the world reflect their religious path. Particular emphasis is placed on the questions of religious inspiration and creativity, and the manner that these are formed in the process of training in contemplation. Previously RS 0283.

RLST 2886 Buddhism in the United States 3 Credits
Attributes: RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, UDIV U.S. Diversity
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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 (impoveryshened 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. Previously RS 0286.

RLST 2889 Tantrism 3 Credits
Attributes: ANMC Asian Studies Elective, RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, WDIV World Diversity
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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. Previously RS 0289.

RLST 2900 Special Topics (Shell) 3 Credits
Attributes: RSST RS Religious Studies Pathway, RSTH RS Theology Pathway
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
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. Previously RS 0299.

RLST 3990 Independent Study 1-3 Credits
Prerequisite: One 1000-level religious studies course.
Students, in consultation with a department director, define their course of study. Previously RS 0398.

Faculty

Professors
Davidson
Lakeland
Nguyen, chair
Thiel
Umansky

Associate Professors
Dallavalle
Hardy, C. (Visiting)
Slotemaker
Willsky-Ciollo

Assistant Professors
Schmidt, T. (Visiting)

Lecturers
Coscacchi
Gaines
McGinley
Prosnit
Ranstrom
Tunney

Professors Emeriti
Benney
Dreyer
Humphrey
Lang