

The College of Charleston

Religious Studies Fall 2007 Course Brochure

Religious Studies website <http://www.cofc.edu/~rels/>

All religious studies courses satisfy the Humanities requirement. There are both a major and a minor in religious studies for those with a serious interest in the study of religion.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 33 semester hours, that must include:

- 1) RELS 105 or 110
- 2) RELS 210 Theories in the Study of Religions
- 3) one of: RELS 225, 230, or 235
- 4) one of: RELS 240, 245, or 248
- 5) one of: RELS 250, 260, 270
- 6) one of: RELS 201, 202, or 205
- 7) RELS 450: Senior Seminar in Religious Studies
- 8) one additional course at the 200-level or above
- 9) two additional courses at the 300-level or above
- 10) additional elective: 1 course from RELS 105-499

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MINOR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES: 18 semester hours (at least three hours of which must be at or above the 300 level), which must include:

- 1) RELS 105 or RELS 110
- 2) one of: RELS 225, 230, 235, 240, 245, 248
- 3) one of: RELS 201, 202, or 205
- 4) one course from RELS 300-499
- 5) Additional Electives: 2 courses from RELS 105-499. With the approval of the Chair of Religious Studies, one course (200 level or above) in a related discipline may be substituted for number 4 above.

Religious Studies Course Offerings (5/17/07 update)

ASST 105.090	Value and Tradition in Asian Civilization	Irwin	MW	04:00-05:15	ECTR 219
RELS 101.001	Approaches to Religion	Bjerken	MWF	09:00-09:50	ECTR 103
RELS 101.002	Approaches to Religion	Bjerken	MWF	10:00-10:50	ECTR 103
RELS 101.003	Approaches to Religion	Thomas	MWF	02:00-02:50	ECTR 219
RELS 101.004	Approaches to Religion	Thomas	MWF	03:00-03:50	ECTR 219
RELS 105.001	Intro to World Religions	Cormack	MWF	09:00-09:50	ECTR 116
RELS 105.002	Intro to World Religions	McDaniel	TR	09:25-10:40	ECTR 219
RELS 105.003	Intro to World Religions	McDaniel	TR	10:50-12:05	ECTR 219
RELS 105.004	Intro to World Religions	Siegler	MWF	01:00-01:50	ECTR 103
RELS 105.005	Intro to World Religions	Doire	MWF	11:00-11:50	ECTR 219
RELS 105.006	Intro to World Religions	Doire	MWF	12:00-12:50	ECTR 219
RELS 201.001	Hebrew Bible: History & Interpretation	Huddlestun	TR	12:15-01:30	ECTR 219
RELS 201.002	Hebrew Bible: History & Interpretation	Huddlestun	TR	01:40-02:55	ECTR 219
RELS 210.001	Theories in Study of Religions	Thomas	MWF	12:00-12:50	ECTR 103
RELS 225.001	The Jewish Tradition	Shanes	TR	10:50-12:05	JSC 209
RELS 230.001	The Christian Tradition	Cormack	MWF	11:00-11:50	ECTR 103
RELS 248.001	Religious Traditions of China & Japan	Siegler	MWF	09:00-09:50	ECTR 219
RELS 248.002	Religious Traditions of China & Japan	Siegler	MWF	10:00-10:50	ECTR 219
RELS 265.001	Women & Religion	Doire	MWF	02:00-02:50	ECTR 103
RELS 265.002	Women & Religion	Doire	MWF	03:00-03:50	ECTR 103
RELS 298.001	Nature, Mind, & Spirit	Irwin	MWF	01:00-01:50	ECTR 219
RELS 310.001	Sacred Texts	Huddlestun	TR	09:25-10:40	ECTR 103
RELS 375.001	ST: Religion and Psychology	McDaniel	TR	01:40-02:55	ECTR 103
RELS 405.001	Religion After 9/11	Bjerken	MW	04:00-05:15	ECTR 103

Religious Studies Course Descriptions

RELS 105: Introduction to World Religions

Section 001 (MWF 0900-0950)

Prof. Cormack

NO PREREQUISITES

An introductory survey of the major religions of mankind, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Will we look at the historical and geographical development of different branches of various religions, and analyze films and primary sources.

RELS 105: Introduction to World Religions

Section 002 (TR 09:25-10:40)

Section 003 (TR 10:50-12:05)

Prof. McDaniel

NO PREREQUISITES

This class will explore indigenous religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, as well as several other religions. There will be four tests and one paper, and also films and guest speakers.

RELS 105: Introduction to World Religions

Section 004 (MWF 01:00-01:50)

Prof. Siegler

NO PREREQUISITES

This course introduces the beliefs and practices of important religious traditions, emphasizing how religions change and interact with each other in the modern world. Approximately one week each will be spent on the following topics: Theories of Religion, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Religions of India, Buddhism, Religions of China and Japan, Religions in America, Native American Religions, African-American Religions, and New Religious Movements.

RELS 105: Introduction to World Religions

Section 005 (MWF 11:00-11:50)

Section 006 (MWF 12:00-12:50)

Prof. Doire

NO PREREQUISITES

This course is designed to be an introduction to the study of religion and of the world's major religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our study will include each tradition's historical development, sacred text, ritual, concept of the divine and soteriology. The methodology will include analysis through historical, literary, comparative and feminist criticisms. Primary and secondary texts will be read and evaluated.

RELS 101: Approaches to Religion (In Search of the Sacred, the Strange, & the Substance of Faith)

Section 001 (MWF 09:00-09:50)

Section 002 (MWF 10:00-10:50)

Prof. Bjerken

NO PREREQUISITES

This course introduces students to Christianity and other religions in America, to Indian Hinduism and to Tibetan Buddhism by focusing on their distinctive understandings of sacred place and pilgrimage. We begin by reading the studies of two "Road Scholars," who seek to understand American religions while they undertake a common American ritual: the road trip. After visiting many odd and fascinating roadside religious attractions in the US, we travel to the ancient and living city of Banaras in India. This sacred city will serve as a lens through which the worldview of Hindu pilgrims comes into focus. Finally we journey to Mt. Kailash in the Himalayas, regarded by Tibetan Buddhists as the central axis of the universe and a very powerful pilgrimage site. The goal of the course is to

see these strange and wondrous places as an expression of the religious imagination, where believers have sought to give outward form to their religious experiences. We will rely on texts that combine travel narrative and religious study, as well as documentary films and slides to gain insight into the religious art, rituals, and sacred stories of the pilgrims.

RELS 101: Approaches to Religion

Section 003 (MWF 02:00-02:50)

Section 004 (MWF 03:00-03:50)

Prof. Thomas

NO PREREQUISITES

What makes religious experience distinctive from other sorts of experience? While addressing religion in the context of wider social and cultural forces, we will examine accounts of religious experience from a variety of traditions (Pentecostalism, the Baptist tradition, Islam, and Buddhism) We will also explore the various interpretations of religious experiences, interpretations provided by phenomenology, psychology, sociology, and sociobiology.

RELS 201: Hebrew Bible: History & Interpretation

Section 001 (TR 12:15-01:30)

Section 002 (TR 01:40-02:55)

Prof. Huddleston

In this course, the student is introduced to the academic study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, examining issues of its composition, historical development, and interpretation (ancient and modern). Particular genres or types of biblical literature will be considered in light of their wider ancient Near Eastern context (creation and cosmos, legal material, wisdom of the sages, etc.). In reading and analyzing selected portions of the Hebrew scripture, students will be exposed to various historical-critical, literary, and archaeological interpretations of the text. Topics covered include the covenant theme in Genesis and beyond, kingship in ancient Israel, the exodus event (history and archaeology), the role of prophets and the nature of ancient Israelite prophecy, the Davidic messiah-king and messianic expectation, biblical wisdom literature, and love poetry.

RELS 210: Theories in Study of Religions

Section 001 (MWF 12:00-12:50)

Prof. Thomas

NO PREREQUISITES

This course introduces theoretical frameworks in the academic study of religion. The utilization of these frameworks raises several questions concerning the definitions and characteristics of religion; the functions of religion in psychology, sociology, and politics; comparative religion; the interdependent roles of outside observer and inside participant; and religion's presence in the public, secular sphere.

RELS 225: The Jewish Tradition

Section 001 (TR 10:50-12:05)

Prof. Shanes

NO PREREQUISITES

A multidisciplinary introduction to the history, beliefs, practices, and institutions of the Jewish tradition, from its biblical foundations to the modern state of Israel.

Note: This course may not be taken for credit if credit has been received for JWST 200.

RELS 230: The Christian Tradition

Section 001 (MWF 11:00-11:50)

Prof. Cormack

NO PREREQUISITES

A historical survey of the development of Christian doctrine and practice. This is *not* a Bible course. We will make extensive use of primary sources from the beginnings of Christianity to the present day to help understand how Christians throughout two millennia have viewed God and human beings, heaven and hell, in this life and the next.

RELS 248: Religious Traditions of China & Japan

Section 001 (MWF 09:00-09:50)

Section 002

Prof. Siegler

NO PREREQUISITES

This course chronologically surveys major religious ideas and practices of China and Japan, including ancestor worship, Taoism, Confucianism, Zen Buddhism, state religion, popular religion, Shinto, new religious movements, and post-modern religiosity.

RELS 265: Women & Religion

Section 001 (MWF 02:00-02:50)

Section 002 (MWF 03:00-03:50)

Prof. Doire

NO PREREQUISITES

Women and Religion will examine two aspects of "woman" as she has been encountered in human religious history, i.e., through the religious roles of women, and representations of the divine feminine. The course will analyze the various functions and roles of women as they participated in religious activity. Attention will also be paid to religiously and culturally constructed gender ideology and role expectations. These roles will include the priestess, the holy virgin, the saint, the martyr and the mystic. Treatment of the divine feminine will focus on images of the goddess through various historical time periods and cultures. The methodology will consist of analysis through historical, comparative and feminist criticism. Both primary and secondary texts will be utilized.

RELS 298: Nature, Mind, & Spirit

Section 001 (MWF 01:00-01:50)

Prof. Irwin

NO PREREQUISITES

This course will investigate the relationship between concepts of mind, soul, and spirit in relationships to attitudes toward nature in different spiritual traditions, with a primary emphasis on esoteric teachings, alternative religions, and some contemporary science. We will read works related to occult views of nature, hermeticism, deep ecology, panpsychism, process theology, and feminist views of nature as well as review a selection of more traditional religious theories on the topic. The goals of the course are to provide a context for reflection on how various individual representatives of religious or spiritual traditions have understood the relationship between nature and human life, how these views are relative to different forms of anthropological cosmology, and how these values are in harmony or conflict with each other. We will also consider the topic in terms of gender perspective, social values, and the impact of these ideas on post-modern identity. No Prerequisites.

RELS 310: Sacred Texts

Section 001 (TR 09:25-10:40)

Prof. Huddleston

PREREQUISITE: *Either three semester hours in religious studies or permission of the instructor*

This course examines how those peoples of the ancient Near East (Mesopotamia, Egypt, and the Levant) explained the origins of the gods and the cosmos, in short, the world as they understood it. Before coming to the Bible itself, we set the stage by looking at ideas about creation from Egypt (including Pyramid and Coffin texts), Mesopotamia (e.g., Gilgamesh and Enuma Elish), and ancient Canaan (THE Baal epic). Following these, we then turn to the biblical traditions in Genesis and other lesser-known biblical passages (from Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Isaiah). Most importantly, the biblical texts will be examined and discussed as part of the larger ancient Near Eastern tradition.

RELS 375: ST: Religion and Psychology

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

Prof. McDaniel

PREREQUISITE: *Either three semester hours in religious studies or permission of the instructor*

This course will explore the history of psychological approaches to religion, as well as religious understandings of self, mind and emotion. We shall look at the ideas of James, Freud, Jung, Hillman, Maslow, Wilber, Grof, and Fowler, and explore such issues as ecstatic experience, conversion, spiritual direction and development, religious uses of drugs, cross-cultural ideas of consciousness, meditation, spiritual emergency, and religious understandings of violence and martyrdom. There will be four tests and one paper.

RELS 405: Revisiting Religion after 9/11: Religion, Violence, & Conflict Resolution

Section 001 (MW 04:00-05:15)

Prof. Bjerken

PREREQUISITE: Either nine semester hours in religious studies or permission of the instructor

Recent years have seen an alarming global increase in religiously motivated violence, often inspired too by nationalism, colonialism, and ethnic conflict. Historically, religious ideas have been used to justify both war and peace, both violence and reconciliation. The course will provide students with critical tools from a variety of disciplines within the field of Religious Studies to make sense of current events in which religion is intertwined with nationalism and the preservation of ethnic and racial identities, for these toxic combinations often result in violence. As case studies, we will examine Hindu-Muslim conflicts in modern India, conflicts between Christian fundamentalism and African animism, the "war on terror" after 9/11, and the escalating role of religious rhetoric in American politics today. We will also read from a range of texts, including novels, ethnographic travelogue, theoretical articles, and books by scholars who interrogate the nature of religion in light of the violence committed in its name. The course is designed as a seminar course, and it has 9 hours in RELS courses as a prerequisite.

MAYMESTER 2007

RELS 105: Intro to World Religions

Section 001 (MTWRF 08:30-12:00)

Prof. Doire

NO PREREQUISITES

This course is designed to be an introduction to the study of religion and of the world's major religious traditions including Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Our study will include each tradition's historical development, sacred text, ritual, concept of the divine and soteriology. The methodology will include analysis through historical, literary, comparative and feminist criticisms. Primary and secondary texts will be implemented.

SUMMER I 2007

RELS 110: Approaches to Religion

Section 001 (MTWRF 11:45-01:30)

Prof. Bossman

NO PREREQUISITES

This course will introduce religious studies through a particular theme, such as holy people, the body, or death and the afterlife. Both religious phenomena and theories of interpretation will be covered.

RELIGIOUS STUDIES COURSE BROCHURE for Fall 2007

RELS 298: ST: Religion and Feminism

Section 001 (MTWRF 09:45-11:30)

Prof. Doire

NO PREREQUISITES

The feminist critique of history and culture has impacted virtually every aspect of academia. This course will examine feminist theory and its relationship to the study of religion. Areas of examination will include feminist critical theory and the analysis of patriarchal religion, feminist hermeneutical models for reading religious writings and sacred texts, and feminist religious ethics.

SUMMER II 2007

RELS 115: Religion and Society

Section 001 (MTWRF 09:45-11:30)

Prof. Bossman

NO PREREQUISITES

A study of the social and political dimensions of religion, including the role of religion in the framework of culture and history.