

Department of Religious Studies

2021 Spring Undergraduate Courses

Important Dates

January 20

First day of classes

January 27

Last day to add, drop with no grade or change grade type (P/NC or Audit)

February 24

Deadline to apply for May 2021 graduation

March 01

Fall 2021 schedule available on web

March 18

Last day to withdraw from course (s); grade subject to withdrawal policy

March 29 - April 03

Spring recess
no classes

April 30

Day of Remembrance

April 05

Registration begins for Summer and Fall 2021

May 05

Last day of classes

May 06

Reading day

May 07 - 13

Final examinations

May 14 - 15

Commencement



RELS 1200-001 thru 1200-008

World Religions

Online Synchronous / Tuesdays / 10:00 / 11:30 / 1:00 / 2:30 and Online Asynchronous / Joanne Maguire

Understanding the news, deciphering memes, working with diverse groups of people, and analyzing history, politics, and ethics all require a grasp of the diversity of religions across the world. Students in this course will learn about a wide range of practices and concepts identified as "religion" while using that knowledge in weekly virtual problem-based discussion sections.

- *Cultural or Historical Analysis*



RELS 2000-002

Out of This World: Fantastic Journeys

Online Synchronous / TR 11:30-12:45 / John Reeves

This course provides an overview of a wide range of early visionary accounts that feature ascents to heaven, descents to hell, and voyages to utopias positioned in regions located on the other side of our world. All of the materials studied in this course stem from ancient Mesopotamian, Egyptian, Jewish, Christian, Zoroastrian, and Muslim religious literature.

- *Textual or Historical Analysis*

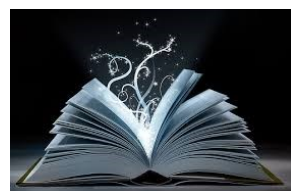


RELS 2000-003

Journey Into Buddhism

Online Asynchronous / Janna Shedd

This class will survey the history, philosophies, and practices of Buddhism across Asia, with special emphasis on the religion's cultural diversity. Topics will include the life of the historical Buddha; Buddhist theories of no-self and rebirth; applied morality; monastic lifestyles; practices such as meditation and ritual; and Buddhist supernatural beings. We will examine these and other topics in their local cultural contexts so that students will have the opportunity to compare regional differences in Buddhist beliefs and lived traditions. - *Cultural or Textual Analysis*



RELS 2000-007

Magic and Religion

Online Asynchronous / Barbara Thiede

Ancient incantations and adjurations, spells and amulets, magic words, prophecy, divination – in what ways can and do religious practices, ideas and ritual intersect with magic? We'll begin by studying what "religion" and "magic" mean for scholars. Then we'll explore how magic and religion overlap in both ancient and modern societies – including some of our own time.

- *Cultural or Historical Analysis*



RELS 2102-001

Introduction to Asian Religions

Online Asynchronous / Janna Shedd

An introduction to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shinto. Emphasis on the myths, stories, symbols, rituals, ideas, and ethical practices of these religions in their classical formulations and in their contemporary practices. - *Cultural or Textual Analysis*

RELS 2104-001

Hebrew Scriptures

Online Asynchronous
Barbara Thiede

There is a fascinating story behind the creation of ancient biblical literature. In this class, we will look at the linguistic, historical, and archeological evidence that helps scholars understand who wrote biblical literature and why. We explore the writers' sense of humor and political agendas and discover how later readers reinvented biblical texts.- *Textual or Historical Analysis*



RELS 2105-001

Introduction to the New Testament

Online Synchronous / Fridays 11:15-12:05 / and Online Asynchronous / David Clausen

Our earliest written sources about the Christ-faith are contained in the 27 books of the New Testament. When were they written? Who wrote them? We will conduct historical and textual investigations of the gospels, Acts, and the letters of Paul and others in order to reveal the various ways in which they understood the Christ-event. We will consider such questions as: Why are the gospels so similar in some respects and yet so different in others? What are the obstacles for rediscovering the historical Jesus? What was Paul's real message and why was it so often challenged?
- *Textual or Historical Analysis*



RELS 2120-001

Christianity

Online Synchronous / MW 12:20-1:10 / and Online Asynchronous
Janet McDaniel

This course takes you on a journey following the story of Christianity/Christianities. It begins with the Greco-Roman and Judean worldviews out of which it began, follows its growth over two millennia as it evolves, diverges, adapts, transforms, and syncretizes with the multitude of peoples it encounters and embraces. You will investigate not only the history of the tradition(s), but also its current, contemporary manifestations in a global, modern world.
- *Cultural, Textual, or Historical Analysis*



RELS 2301-001

The End of the World

Online Synchronous / TR 10:00-11:15 / James Tabor

A focus on how ancient views of the apocalyptic end of the world in the West and the East have fundamentally shaped and transformed religious traditions from ancient times into our own day. Special emphasis on how 20th and 21st century systems of contemporary millenarian and apocalyptic thinking function in our age of climate change, pandemics, and political unrest.
- *Cultural or Historical Analysis*

RELS 2600-090

Orientation to the Study of Religion

Online Synchronous / Tuesdays 5:30-6:45 / and Online Asynchronous
Alex Kaloyanides

This course examines the animating theoretical and methodological questions in the academic study of religion. We will consider the emergence and history of the field as well as prominent themes such as myth, experience, and culture. This course pays close attention to the particular research, reading, and writing practices that shape the field.
- *Writing Intensive*



RELS 3000-001

Ghosts, Demons, Fear, and Conspiracy in American Culture

Online Asynchronous
Sean McCloud
(Cross-listed with AMST 3050)

Recent polls show an increasing number of Americans believe in ghosts and demons, have heightened senses of fear, and that at least 75% believe in one or more false conspiracy theories. This class analyzes these subjects and various scholarly explanations as to why so many Americans currently hold these beliefs and fears.
- *Historical or Textual Analysis*



RELS 3114-001
Why God Lies: The Difficult Deity of the Hebrew Scriptures/ Old Testament

Online Synchronous
 TR 11:30-12:45 / Barbara Thiede
 Is the deity omniscient and omnipotent? Or does God fumble, bumble, and mumble? In this course, we will explore challenging passages of Old Testament/ Hebrew Bible in which the deity appears to fib, connive, or outright lie to patriarchs, prophets, and Israelite people. We'll work to understand the bible's cultural and historical context and consider how the character of God is "read."
 -Historical or Textual Analysis

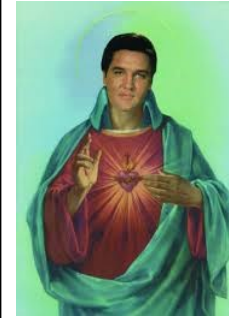
RELS 3116-001

Paul
Online Synchronous
 TR 2:30-3:45 / James Tabor
 A careful consideration of Paul's letters in the New Testament, his message and mission in his own time, and his enduring influence on both the Church and society through the ages and into our modern era.
 - Textual or Historical Analysis



RELS 3115-001

Early Christianity
Online Synchronous / Fridays 12:20-1:10 and Online Asynchronous / David Clausen
 The Christian church has been the most powerful religious, political, social, cultural, economic, and intellectual institution in the history of Western civilization. Yet the Christian movement did not start out as a culturally significant phenomenon; it began in a remote part of the Roman Empire as a small, lower-class group of followers of a Jewish apocalyptic preacher, crucified as an enemy of the state. How did Christianity become the preferred religion of a Roman emperor, and grow to embrace an empire? Trace the early centuries of Christianity from Christ to Constantine.
 - Textual or Historical Analysis



RELS 3210-001
Religion and Popular Culture

Online Asynchronous
 Sean McCloud
 (Cross-listed with AMST 3050)
 An examination of the interactions and intertwining of religion and popular culture. Topics may include, but are not limited to, popular literature, domestic rituals, material and visual cultures, space and place, fan cultures, media, and folklore. Emphasis on how religion and popular culture shape and are shaped by issues of identity, community, nostalgia, memory, commercialism, capitalism, power, and meaning.
 -Textual or Cultural Analysis



RELS 3213-001

Jesus on the Silver Screen
Online Synchronous
 TR 1:00-2:15 / Kent Brintnall
 (Cross-listed with ENGL 3050 & FILM 3051)
 An examination of cinematic representations of Jesus with attention to their relation to the historical, social and political circumstances of their production and to ongoing conversations about the character, meaning and significance of the Jesus story.
 -Cultural or Textual Analysis

RELS 3225-001
Religion and Race

Online Synchronous
 Wednesdays / 2:30-3:45
 and *Online Asynchronous*
 Julia Moore
 (Cross-listed with AFRS 3050 & HIST3000)
 An examination of the historical and theoretical influence of religion upon racial identity, discrimination, and stratification in society. A key focus in this course addresses the historical and religious legacies of Christianity in relationship to the racial constructions of white and non-white peoples.
 - Historical or Cultural Analysis



RELS 3230-001

Religion, Race and Murder

Online Synchronous / Tuesdays
2:30-3:45 / and Online
Asynchronous / Julia Moore
(Cross-listed with AFRS 3050 &
HIST3000)



An introduction to the intersection of race, religion, and violence, this course explores how the religions of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and various Asian traditions have been used to justify and even condone acts of violence. - *Textual or Cultural Analysis*



RELS 3235-001

Muslims in America

Online Synchronous
MW / 2:30-3:45 / Micah Hughes

A historical and thematic examination of Islam in America. Explores the intellectual cultural, social, and

political roots of Islam as a central component of American religious history. Students will read about and discuss topics including race, slavery, autobiography, gender, civil rights, nationalism, and liberation in relation to Islam as a religious tradition.

- *Cultural or Historical Analysis*

RELS 3260-001

Buddhism in the Modern World

Online Synchronous / Tuesdays / 4:00-5:15
and Online Asynchronous / Alex Kaloyanides

Is Buddhism a philosophy? A mind science? An ancient mystical path? A modern construct? This seminar will explore how Buddhism has been understood in the modern era.



Our primary source materials will range from Orientalist poetry to Zen essays to Insight Meditation

manuals to 21st-century films to

contemporary academic critiques as we discuss one of today's most popular religions.

- *Textual or Cultural Analysis*

RELS 3400-001

Applied Research / Fieldwork

By approval / Celia Sinclair

Internships in business or community-based organizations. Specific content based on contract between student, supervising professor and cooperating organization. Fulfills the [C], [H], or [T] requirement. Approximately 120 contact hours for the semester. Contact Celia Sinclair.

RELS 4000-090

Religion and Violence

Online Synchronous
Wednesdays 5:30-8:15
Micah Hughes
(Cross-listed with RELS 5000)

This course interrogates the critical interaction between religion and violence in modernity. It tests modern, secular assumptions that religion is inherently violent or is a particularly egregious "cause" of violence in the world. Students will read critical theories, study historical events, and engage case studies of violence and religion across geographical boundaries and religious traditions.

- *Historical or Cultural Analysis*



RELS 4107-001

Early Judaism

Online Synchronous / Thursdays
2:30-5:15 / John Reeves
(Cross-listed with RELS 5107-001)

Focuses upon the history and literature of the period during which rabbinic Judaism develops

and evolves into the classical expression of Jewish religiosity; i.e., from roughly 450 BCE to the mid-600s CE.

- *Historical or Textual Analysis*



RELS 4600-001

Senior Seminar

Online Synchronous / Mondays 4:00-5:15
and Online Asynchronous / Letha Victor

This capstone course for majors develops students' written and spoken communication skills and their ability to critically evaluate the content and form of scholarship broadly centered upon religion. Students learn to apply and synthesize scholarly approaches to new subjects and situations.

- *Oral and Writing intensive*

Liberal Studies Courses
Religious Studies faculty teach the following courses for the General

Western Civilizations

LBST 2101-336: Back to the Garden: Music Culture, and Faith
Online Synchronous & Asynchronous / MW 10:10-11:00 / Janet McDaniel



LBST 2101-337: The Cult of Horror
Online Synchronous / TR 2:30-3:45 / Aman Agah

LBST 2101-338: Magic and Religion
Online Asynchronous / Barbara Thiede



Global Connections

LBST 2102-335: Asian Religions and Culture in Global Media
Online Asynchronous / Janna Shedd



LBST 2102-336: Asian Religions and Culture in Global Media
Online Asynchronous / Janna Shedd

LBST 2102-337: Witchcraft and Haunting
Online Synchronous & Asynchronous / Thursdays 11:30-12:30 / Letha Victor



Critical Thinking and Communication

LBST 2301-335: A Good Life. What Is It?
Online Asynchronous / Celia Sinclair



LBST 2301-336: A Good Life. What Is It?
Online Asynchronous / Celia Sinclair

LBST 2301-337: A Good Life. What Is It?
Online Asynchronous / Celia Sinclair



LBST 2301-338: Sustainability and Identity
Online Asynchronous / Tina Katsanos

LBST 2301-339: Sustainability and Identity
Online Asynchronous / Tina Katsanos

LBST 2301-340: Sustainability and Identity
Online Asynchronous / Tina Katsanos

LBST 2301-341: Sustainability and Identity
Online Asynchronous / Tina Katsanos



For more information visit religiousstudies.uncc.edu

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