

# Religious Studies (REL)

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## **REL 2010. Introduction to Religion and Culture. 3 Hours.**

An analysis of how different religions respond to a variety of human issues such as marriage and family, war and peace, gender roles, poverty, child labor, and increasing globalization.

## **REL 2020. World Religions. 3 Hours.**

A study of the major religious traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. Concepts of the Holy, sacred stories, rituals, symbols, ethical codes, and sacred communities are examined in pre-literate cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

## **REL 2020H. Honors World Religions. 3 Hours.**

An enriched study of the major religious traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. Concepts of the Holy, sacred stories, rituals, symbols, ethical codes, and sacred communities are examined in pre-literate cultures, Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. A research component is selected from a variety of options relevant to the world's religions.

## **REL 3030. African to African American Philosophy and Religious Studies. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3030, REL 3030, and NAIS 3030. An examination of philosophies and religious traditions which begin in Africa and move through the Caribbean into the Americas. The course emphasizes ontological and epistemological themes that begin in Africa and cross the Atlantic as well as Indigenous African influences in the philosophies and religions of the Caribbean and the Americas.

## **REL 3210. Religion, Violence, and Nonviolence. 3 Hours.**

Prerequisite: REL 2020 or permission of the instructor. A study of the disturbing alliance between religion and violence and the hopeful alliance between religion and peace in a variety of religious traditions and social contexts. The course will involve historical, cultural, textual, and comparative analysis.

## **REL 3220. Inter-Religious Dialogue and Understanding. 3 Hours.**

A study of the historical, cultural, philosophical, and theological themes, issues, and beliefs involved in inter-religious dialogue and in respectful interaction among the major world religions.

## **REL 3240. Philosophy of Sex. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3240 and WGST 3240. An examination of the historic and current definitions and scholarly trends involving human sexuality. Religious and philosophical constructs in both Western and non-Western cultures will be emphasized.

## **REL 3270. The Human Quest for Faith and Values. 3 Hours.**

A study of the human phenomenon of faith and the quest for values. This course examines the proposition that faith is a human universal - that all persons have some way of making meaning and choosing values. Emphasis is given to categories of faith and human development in interaction with human situations as portrayed in novels, films, and historical documents.

## **REL 3300. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Hours.**

The study of basic problems of religious belief and critical analysis of proposed solutions to these problems.

## **REL 3330. New Testament. 3 Hours.**

A general academic introduction to the history, thought and literature of the New Testament, and to some of the major problems addressed in the area of New Testament studies.

## **REL 3340. Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. 3 Hours.**

A presentation of the principle characters, events, social structures and theological perspectives reflected in texts of the Hebrew Bible. Old Testament/Hebrew Bible introduces methods and interpretive frameworks shaped by current biblical scholarship.

## **REL 3350. Religious Autobiography and Spiritual Transformation. 3 Hours.**

A study of the world's diverse religious traditions using the autobiographical writings of influential practitioners who inspire change through daily example.

## **REL 3360. Reading Sacred Texts: Hebrew Bible. 3 Hours.**

An advanced reading of the Hebrew Bible utilizing recent methods and interpretative frameworks found in current scholarship. Emphasis is given to historical, literary, and cultural approaches to major texts.

## **REL 3400. Existentialism. 3 Hours.**

The study of some of the principal existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, Simone de Beauvoir, Camus, Buber, and Jaspers. Also offered as PHIL 3400.

## **REL 3500. Women and Gender in Early Christianity. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as WGST 3500. A study of images and representations of women and gender in the New Testament and other early Christian texts including apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, and Gnostic writings with special attention paid to historical and contemporary significance.

## **REL 3504. The Archaeology of Ancient Israel. 3 Hours.**

A study of the archaeology of ancient Israel within the cultural context of the Near East. The course will examine the history, culture, and religion of the relevant eras from the Neolithic Period to the Roman Era. Emphasis will be given to the origins of Israel in the Late Bronze and Iron Ages, to the growth and development of the Israelite state, and to the origin and growth of early Christianity.

**REL 3505. Varieties of Early Christianity. 3 Hours.**

A study of variety of early Christian thought and practice in the first three centuries of the Common Era with a focus on an examination of extra-canonical literature.

**REL 3510. Judaism. 3 Hours.**

An inquiry that examines historical and cultural implications of the diaspora from the post-biblical period in Judaism to the present. The course addresses sacred texts, significant figures and the influence of social and political change on the integrity and perseverance of this tradition.

**REL 3520. Islam. 3 Hours.**

An introduction to Islam from its inception in the 7th century to the present. This inquiry examines historical and social dimensions of Islam in several geographic and cultural contexts including major contributions to western civilization. The study of principal figures, sacred texts and traditions will familiarize students with the basic features of this world religion.

**REL 3530. Christian Ethics. 3 Hours.**

Classical and contemporary sources, methods, and norms evident in a variety of approaches to Christian ethics such as Biblical ethics, feminist ethics, Catholic and Protestant social teachings, and liberation theology. Applies the social teachings of Christian traditions to relevant issues in social ethics today.

**REL 3540. Ecology and World Religions. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3540. An exploration of how Eastern and Western religious traditions address the question of the environment. This study will include the relationship of harmony with nature found in indigenous cultures, such as Native Americans and Aborigines, and will also emphasize the reading of contemporary ecological spiritualities.

**REL 3600. Women and Religion. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as WGST 3600. An introduction to historical, theological, spiritual and liturgical dimensions of women's experience within religious traditions. Research opportunities increase students' awareness of the implication of gender as an interpretive category in religion.

**REL 3610. Native American Thought. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3610 and NAIS 3610. A study of Native American cultures in the areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, and spirituality. The course will examine historic and current trends related to the interaction between Native American and Western cultures.

**REL 3620. Post Colonization Issues in Indigenous Cultures. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3620 and NAIS 3620. An examination of post-colonial issues in Indigenous cultures throughout the world. The course will focus on the individual and academic voices of Indigenous people. Attention will be given to issues of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, spirituality, ethics and a range of social and political issues.

**REL 3630. Native American Women. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3630 or WGST 3630 or NAIS 3630. An examination of the contributions of North and South American Indigenous women in the areas of epistemology, ontology, metaphysics, religion, spirituality, and ethics. The course will include a range of Indigenous cultures, such as Alaskan, Hawaiian, and Pacific and Atlantic islanders and will explore the issues faced by Indigenous women in the Western hemisphere.

**REL 3640. Alternative Religions of the World. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as NAIS 3640. An examination of the religions of the world not typically counted among the major world religions. The course will include the religions of Africa, South America, the Pacific and Atlantic islanders, and Wiccan and Neo-Pagan religions. The focus will be on the traditions as they are expressed and experienced by the followers of the religions.

**REL 3650. Mysticism and Social Justice. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3650. An examination of the link between mysticism and social justice through selected writings of Western and Eastern mystical thinkers. The course will explore the historical and social contexts that gave rise to these mystical theologies and the personal and social commitment to integrate the contemplative life and the active life.

**REL 3700. Buddhism. 3 Hours.**

An exploration of major historical, cultural, and philosophical developments of the Buddhist tradition from its inception in 5th century B.C.E. India to its flourishing in modern times. Buddhist teachings, texts, and practices in Theravada, Mahayana, and Zen contexts are examined. Also offered as PHIL 3700.

**REL 3710. Hinduism. 3 Hours.**

An exploration of major historical, cultural, and philosophical developments of the Hindu tradition from its inception in 2300 B.C.E. India to its flourishing in modern times. Hindu teachings, texts, cosmology, ritual, symbolic expression, and ethical practices will be explored. Also offered as PHIL 3710.

**REL 3800. Philosophy, Religion and Film. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3800. A study of the role of film in culture. This explores social context, religious themes, symbols, motifs, and images through screenings of films combined with an introduction to the growing literature on religion, ethics, and film.

**REL 3920. Fate, Free Will, and Time. 3 Hours.**

Also offered as PHIL 3920. An in-depth examination of the problem of free will and determinism and its relations to the problem of time, using historical readings and their relation to modern science, fiction, and film.

**REL 4700. Topics in Religious Studies. 1-3 Hours.**

A forum for dialogue and discourse on a variety of timely issues in Religious Studies. The course reflects interests and concern of faculty and students by addressing particular subjects that relate the nexus of religion and human experience. May be repeated for up to 9 hours of credit when topics differ.

**REL 4710. Directed Study in Religious Studies. 1-3 Hours.**

An individual study of a special area of religious studies under supervision of instructor. May be repeated for up to 6 hours of credit when topics differ.

**REL 4920. Senior Capstone Course. 3 Hours.**

A capstone course for senior students in the Department of Philosophy who are taking the Religious Studies track. It includes individual research on selected themes, presented by students to their peers and to the Philosophy and Religious Studies faculty.