

Spring 2010

Religious Studies Courses

NEW UNIVERSITY CORE COURSE TO BE OFFERED!

RELS 2001 "Introduction to World Religions"

Designed for all first-year undergraduates. This course exposes students to different religions around the world by asking questions such as, how do different traditions describe the origins of the world? What role does ritual play in religion? What do different religions say about evil and suffering in the world? How do we think about religions differently when we study how they have characterized and treated women? What are the different approaches that scholars take to the study of religion? Students with interests ranging from art to astronomy, from business to biology, will come to appreciate how religion influences how they understand themselves, their interactions with one another, and their place in the cosmos.

Refer to GoSolar for various times and location

RELS 3250—Biblical Studies

MW 12:00-1:15 Louis Ruprecht

Introduction to the interpretation, history, and theology of the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Modern methods of biblical scholarship, such as hermeneutics and form/source criticism.

RELS 3270—Survey of World Religions

TR 9:30-10:45 Kate Daley; TR 11:00-12:15 Molly Bassett

Survey and comparison of the beliefs and practices of the major world religions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Hinduism.

RELS 3305—Modern Christian Thought

TR 1:00-2:15 Vincent Lloyd

Examination of the development of Christian thought from the 16th century to contemporary times. Topics may include the thought of figures such as Luther, Kierkegaard, and Schleiermacher; the rise of rationalism and sciences; and anti-Christian thinkers.

RELS 3750—Theories and Methods in Religion—CTW

TR 2:30-3:45 Kate Daley

A writing intensive introduction to methodological and theoretical issues in the academic study of religion. Psychological, anthropological, sociological, phenomenological, theological, dialogic, and feminist approaches may be covered.

RELS 4060/6060—Evil and God

TR 9:30-10:45 Vincent Lloyd

What is evil? Does the existence of evil in the world challenge belief in God? When we encounter famine, disease, hurricanes, torture, war, or poverty, who (or what) do we hold responsible? How can bad things happen to good people? This course will examine how these questions are approached in religious thought, and also in philosophy, literature, and film.

RELS 4250/6250—African-American Religion

MW 3:00-4:15 STAFF

Survey of the development of African-American religion from colonial times to the present, including an examination of both theological arguments and spiritual experiences.

RELS 4300/6300—Metaphysics

MW 12:00-1:15 George Graham

The questions of metaphysics are among the most puzzling and deep in philosophy. Metaphysics examines the most basic problems of existence. Why is there a world? What is the place of human beings in the world? What makes the real real? And the unreal unreal? What are the most basic features of the world? What should we trust when answering these questions? Religion? Science? Commonsense? Perhaps the fact that a belief is a religious one, a scientific one, or a commonsensical one counts for nothing in metaphysics.

RELS 4490/6490—Topics in Judaism: Rabbinic Literature & Kabbalah

TR 2:30-3:45 Joab Eichenberg-Eilon

In this class we will explore how the institution of the rabbi developed, what the rabbis did, who some key rabbis were, how they viewed their relationship to the Bible, what they wrote in response to the Bible, and how the literature they wrote shaped Judaism for centuries to come. There are no prerequisites for this course, and all readings are in English.

RELS 4610/6610—Hinduism

MW 12:00-1:15 Kathryn McClymond

Introduction to the Hindu gods and goddesses, Hindu temple & domestic worship, and key themes in modern Hinduism. Will include an overview of the development of Hindu thought and practice from ancient times to the present.

RELS 4625/6625—Zen and Shinto

MWF 11:00-11:50 Jonathan Herman

Historical introduction to the Japanese religion and philosophy, tracing its development into Shinto, folk religion, and various Buddhist schools. Special consideration given to Zen Buddhism.

RELS 4630/6630—Comparative Study of Mysticism*MW 1:30-2:45 Jonathan Herman*

In-depth study of mystical texts and tradition, with special attention given to theoretical and methodological inquiry. Readings drawn from a range of traditions and historical periods, as well as from works in contemporary critical theory in the study of religion.

RELS 4690/6690—Secularism, Liberalism & Religion*MW 3:00-4:15 Louis Ruprecht*

Exploration of the role of religion and religious values in the modern, secular state with an emphasis on the past thirty years. Topics may include the defense of the principles of modern liberalism from within religious traditions critiques made by communitarians, Marxist, and Neo-Traditionalists.

RELS 4700/6700—Topics: Religion and American Law*TR 11:00-12:15 Isaac Weiner*

Explores the intersection of religion and American law, focusing on First Amendment jurisprudence. Topics include religion and public schools, government funding for religious institutions, public religious monuments, and the free exercise of religion. Also may consider the historical origins of religious freedom, the role of law in religion, religion's position in American public life, and comparing American legal frameworks to other legal cultures.

RELS 8210—Seminar in Religious Studies*TR 1:00-2:15 David Bell*

Lived Religions: Research Approaches in Religious Lives: This seminar will examine several methodological approaches to studying contemporary religious practices. To prepare scholars who may wish to conduct research with people, the course will explore the fields of ethnography, sociology, and psychology using techniques such as oral histories, questionnaires, qualitative case studies, psychometric measures, and experimental procedures. Balancing the critiques and strengths of each discipline and approach, students will gain: 1) critical skills in how to research design (from reflexive methodology, to phenomenological frameworks, to post-positivist designs); 2) experience in their own research projects including local field work and negotiating IRB requirements; and 3) a significant understanding of interdisciplinary tools available to scholars interested in contemporary religious lives, including such subjects as religious rituals, religious identity, and religious pluralism.

RELS 8210—Seminar in Religious Studies*TR 2:30-3:45 Molly Bassett*

Idols, Icons, and Amulets: The Materials of Religion: In our examination of the material goods and visual practices of religions, we will consider a series of themes pertaining to the creation, perception, and function of religious objects and their relationships to practitioners, observers and scholars. We will draw on theoretical works that arise out of European, American, Native American, and Asian contexts while taking indigenous and vernacular traditions as our material and visual foci. More specifically, we will investigate why material objects are important in religions, how objects like idols and icons gain agency, the problematic nature of deity images and the curious functions of taxonomies. Students are invited to explore how their own projects relate to the theoretical and methodological models introduced in the readings and discussion.

RELS 8970—Teaching Religious Studies*W 4:30-6:00 David Bell*

Required for all graduate students who want to teach RELS 2001 in 2010-11. Offered in conjunction with RELS 2001, MW 1:30-2:45.

RELS 8980—Religious Studies Teaching Practicum*M 4:30-6:30 Kathryn McClymond*

Required of all graduate students teaching first semester of RELS 2001.

RELS 8985—Advanced Teaching Practicum*M 4:30-6:30 Kathryn McClymond*

Required of graduate students teaching their second and third semesters of RELS 2001.

PERS 2001—Comparative Religious Traditions*MW 10:00-10:50 David Bell*

This interdisciplinary course will explore how major religious traditions are often intertwined with the construction of gender and sexual mores. The course introduces a wide scope of tools including social construction, evolutionary psychology, and ethical analysis. After reviewing these approaches, we will look specifically at sexuality within Hinduism, Islam, and Christianity. Beyond the primary goal of understanding the important role of religion in sexuality, the course is also designed to help students see the wide diversity of perspectives to such a topic across the College of Arts and Sciences.

PERS 2001—Religious Diversity*MW 12:00-12:50; TR 2:30-3:20 Isaac Weiner*

This course will introduce students to a wide variety of religious traditions by focusing on how these traditions have developed in the metropolitan Atlanta area. By examining case studies, we also will consider the theological, legal, and civic challenges posed religious diversity.

**Registration: October 19—January 8****404-413-6110****www.gsu.edu/religion**