

# Department of Religious Studies

## Spring 2017 Schedule of Classes

---

### Introduction to Religious Studies

#### REL 100.001

Touna, TR 2:00-3:15 MA 308

#### REL 100.002

McCutcheon, TR 11:00-12:15 GP 208

This Core Humanities course examines the relationships between religion and human beliefs, practices, & culture; surveys debates in the history of the field, e.g., definition of religion, insider/outsider problem, & theories about the origins and function of religion. An ideal intro to the study of religion as carried out in a public university. **HU INB**

### Religions of the World

#### REL 102.001

Ramey, TR 12:30-1:45 TH 30

This Core course comprises an interdisciplinary introduction to the comparative study of practices and concepts identified as the world's religions, highlighting different ways individuals and communities across cultures organize their lives and values; students will compare two different religions in relation to four selected elements. **HU INB**

### Honors Introduction to Religious Studies

#### REL 105.001

Ikeuchi, TR 9:30-10:45 LY 318

#### REL 105.002

Bagger, TR 3:30-4:45 MA 207

#### REL 105.003

Bagger, TR 12:30-1:45 MA 308

As the Honors/Core Humanities introduction to the study of religion, REL 105 examines the material in greater detail than REL 100, and in a smaller class setting. A minimum 3.3 GPA is required to register. **HU INB**

### Religion and Science

#### REL 120.001

Finnegan, TR 2:00-3:15 MA 207

This course is a study of the construction of "science" and "religion," focusing on the ways these concepts have been co-constructed throughout history, looking at the uses of the terms in the history of science and contemporary debates, examining the scientific revolution, nature, gender, science as religion, and cognitive science. **HU**

### Religion and Film in America

#### REL 124.001

Trost, T 3:30-5:50 LY 329

In this course, students will focus on the enduring debate between American culture & religious identity, or—in the

language of the religious studies discipline—between the sacred and the profane. Our basic texts will be six films that have achieved box office or video rental success during the last twenty years. Our conversations about these films will be supplemented with careful readings of religious, cultural, and literary scholarship. **HU**

### Judaism

#### REL 224.001

Jacobs, TR 11:00-12:15 LY 306

This course is an introduction to Judaism, examining its history, philosophy, theology, holiday/festival and life cycles, as well as contemporary experiences, including the Holocaust and the rebirth of the state of Israel. **HU INB**

### Self, Society, and Religions

#### REL 237.001

Bagger, TR 9:30-10:45 GP 231

What is a self & does it consist in one's "identity?" Is "identity" something one discovers or is it something one creates or even performs? What personal & social mechanisms effect self-transformation and how do religious institutions "mortify" the self? This course studies classics on selfhood and identity & examines such historical texts as Teresa of Avila's *Way of Perfection* and Shantideva's *Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*.

### American Religious History

#### REL 241.001

Altman, TR 12:30-1:45 MA 207

What exactly is religion in America? This course offers a broad overview of changing conceptions of religion in American culture, history, & society, from the colonial period to the present; emphasis will be placed on race, politics, immigration, & cultural power. This course will be of use to students interested in American history, politics, race and gender, and cultural studies. **HU**

### English Bible as Literature

#### REL 311.001

Trost, MW 3:30-4:45 MA 102

This Core Writing course offers a critical study of the Hebrew and Christian Bible as literary and theological traditions. Stories will be examined in light of their cultural/historical contexts, placing emphasis on the literary-qualities of texts, to develop an understanding of how it is constructed, the literary & theological relationship between the Old and New Testament, an appreciation for the significance of TANAKH, and a

greater familiarity with some of the stories that have provided the foundation upon which Western Civilization has been constructed. **W**

### **Religion and Identity in South Asia REL 321.001**

Ramey, T 3:30-5:50 MA 210

This course critically analyzes the ways people identify themselves/draw boundaries to separate groups from each other, using case studies focusing on South Asia. While these divisions involve many elements, such as nationality, linguistic identity, gender, and class, aspects of human experience commonly identified as religious frequently intersect with these divisions. Throughout the course, we will develop various theoretical reflections on issues of identity and contested boundaries. **INB**

### **Religion in Popular Culture REL 360.001 40548**

Bagger, R 6:00-9:00 Jan. 24, Feb. 7, March 7, March 21, April 11

This one credit hour course, offered each semester, involves monthly films, discussions, & either the Day or Aronov Lecture. Students will also write a small number of brief commentaries & blog posts on the films. Different films are used each semester, and the course is repeatable for up to 3 credit hours. **Open to all students.**

### **Theorizing Ancient Religion REL 370.001**

Touna, TR 11:00-12:15 MA 210

This course examines how the ancient Greek world is described and represented in the present, that is, in museums, social media, scholarly works, etc. and towards what effects. We will also be discussing such topics as religion, heritage, tradition, identity formation and nation-states as they relate to modern discourses on the ancient Greek past.

### **Religion, Politics, and Culture of the Middle East REL 372.001**

Jacobs, TR 2:00-3:15 MA 210

Whereas religion has, in places, seemingly declined as a political force, religious factors are dominant in personal behavior and political activity in the Middle East. For example, some commentators ask whether Islamic countries are a “state of Muslims” or a “Muslim state.” As such, these countries seem faced with a difficult decision: Do they attempt to balance a particular view of modernity with their own traditions or do they return to what some perceive as a lost theological/religious-political ideal?

**HU: Core Humanities Designation**  
**ASST: Asian Studies Credit**

### **Myth, Ritual, and Magic: Theories of Ritual REL 419.001**

Ikeuchi, TR 3:30-4:45 MA 102

This Core Writing course explores a wide range of rituals, from the stereotypical to the unexpected: initiation rites, religious ceremonies, daily interaction rituals, and soccer hooliganism, among others. We examine various theories about the definitions, meanings, and roles of ritual, sometimes by conducting mini-fieldwork to observe rituals in action. **W**

### **Problems of Evil REL 480.001**

Loewen, TR 9:30-10:45 MA 210

Depending upon your point of view, much is going wrong in the world. But what counts as “evil” may depend upon your viewpoint. This course is therefore about problems of evil (in the plural). This seminar explores the current academic discourses on evil alongside several alternative approaches to it. Our discussions will turn from evil, as a traditional Western challenge to the existence of God, towards considering what it may mean for “things to go wrong” according to a variety of global viewpoints.

### **Senior Capstone Seminar: Sacrifice in Theory and Practice REL 490.001**

Altman, M 3:30-5:50 MA 210

This semester REL 490 will focus on sacrifice. Moving between social theory and case studies we will ask a number of questions. What is a sacrifice? What is the social function of sacrifice? Where can we find sacrifice in the modern world? Thus, we will explore sacrifice as theory, practice, and rhetoric. **(Required of Majors)**

Don't forget about the new REL 400 Honors Thesis—talk to a possible supervisor before trying to register

*Find us online...*



And be sure to make your advising appointment with Prof. Jacobs prior to registering for Spring 2017

**INB: International Business Designation (College of Commerce)**  
**W: Core Writing Designation**