

RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RELST-UA)

RELST-UA 1 Theories & Methods in The Study of Religion (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall

Offered in the fall. Focuses on fundamental theoretical and methodological issues pertaining to the academic study of religion. Exposes students to, and familiarizes them with, some of the more important theories of the origin, character, and function of religion as a human phenomenon. Students are given an opportunity to encounter and test an assortment of the main scholarly approaches to understanding and interpreting religious phenomena, including psychological, sociological, anthropological, and hermeneutical perspectives.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 15 Advanced Seminar. (4 Credits)

Typically offered Spring

Visit the Department of Religious Studies' website for detailed course descriptions of the current semester's topic(s).

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

RELST-UA 19 Sex, Gender & The Bible (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course investigates a series of problems regarding the mutual constitution of male and female in the Hebrew Bible. Through close readings of a range of biblical texts (narrative, law, wisdom literature), we address such issues as the absence of the goddess in monotheism, the literary representation of women and men, the construction of gender ideals, and the legislation of sex and bodily purity. This course is sponsored by the Department of Hebrew & Judaic Studies.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 23 Bible as Literature (4 Credits)

The Bible is a complex and fascinating anthology of ancient literature, written by many different people over the course of nearly a thousand years. The focus of this course will be on reading the Bible as literature, and not as a religious or sacred text. In this course, students will be introduced to various strategies for the literary reading and interpretation of biblical texts. The class will engage diverse literary genres from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, and consider the biblical writers' creative deployment of poetic forms, plot devices, and narrative styles. With the guidance of secondary literature that will introduce us to a number of diverse ways to think about the literary interpretation of these texts, we will read parts of the books of Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Esther, Ruth, Jonah, and the Gospels, as well as selections from the poetic and wisdom traditions. The goals of this course are twofold: 1) to introduce students to literary forms and styles from one corner of the ancient world, and 2) to enable students to engage with these texts from a new perspective and examine the ways in which our assumptions about the origins of a text can and do shape our interpretations of it.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 86 Gender, Sexuality, & The Body in Early Christnty (4 Credits)

Students reexamine the light shed by ancient writings (and other evidence) not only on the role(s) of women in ancient Christian groups but also on the ideologies of gender promoted or assumed by those groups. The focus, while predominantly on women, also extends to the way in which gender identities were constructed and adhered to by males and females.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 97 Of Miracles, Events, and Special Effects (4 Credits)

Do miracles happen? What do miracles, everyday events, and special effects have in common? This course brings together theological, philosophical and media studies to pose questions and offer intellectual resources—an imaginative archive as well as repository—for answering some basic questions regarding human agency and freedom. Do current conditions of globalization and new technological media force us to theorize the concept and practice of religion in altogether novel ways? This course blends lecture and in-class discussion and takes up texts, film and video as our objects of study. There are no pre-requisites.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 111 Populism, Religion, and Crisis in Europe (4 Credits)

Populist rhetoric, rising xenophobia, anti-migrant hysteria, Islamophobia, and high unemployment have called many of the myths of "Europe" into question. Explores the historical and contemporary politics of religion, populism, and crisis in countries throughout the European Union.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 125 Ancient Near Eastern Mythology (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

The myths of the ancient Near East represent the earliest literary expressions of human thought. Students in this class read myths from ancient Egypt, Mesopotamia, Ugarit, Anatolia, and Israel, studying the myths themselves as literary works as well as exploring the ideas and broader issues that shaped them. These myths, including both extensive literary masterpieces such as the Epic of Gilgamesh and shorter work such as the Flight of Etana to Heaven, offer a window into the religious mentality of the ancient Near East, which in turn laid the foundation for many elements of modern Western culture.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 158 Jesus and Judaism (4 Credits)

Explores the Jewishness of Jesus and its reception within ancient, medieval, and modern Judaism. Situates Jesus and his first followers in relation to the Jewish religion and culture of their time, considering the place of Judaism in the origins of Christianity. Explores reactions to Jesus' Jewishness within later Jewish literature, art, and philosophy. Surveys the history of Jewish/Christian relations from antiquity to the present.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 180 Zionism & The State of Israel (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

Examines the history of Zionism and as an ideology and political movement from its origins in the 19th century to the present as reflected in the modern State of Israel. Topics include ideological foundations, the role of Herzl and the rise of political Zionism, the Balfour Declaration, early Jewish settlements in Palestine, Zionism as a cultural focus for diaspora Jewry, the Arab-Zionist encounter, modern Israeli society, and contemporary critiques of Zionism.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 181 Topics in Irish History: (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Topics and prerequisites vary by semester

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 240 Varieties of Mystical Experience (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

What exactly is this thing we call mysticism? As the general, secular public treats religion, so does the mainstream religious public treat mysticism, a special case, replete with mystery and the repository of great potential. Mysticism has served as the space for the bleeding edge of religion, where destabilizing forces have emerged but reactionary, regressive forces as well. Mystical religious communities have been both the most tolerant and the most exclusive, the most libertine and the most abnegating. Is there such a thing as mysticism? Can it be elicited from the religious frameworks in which it resides, or is it merely a modern, academic convention? In this course, we aim to work out some answers to those questions.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 244 Topics: (4 Credits)**

The emphasis of this course varies by semester and is designed to allow flexibility in course offerings from visiting scholars and specialists in particular fields. Visit the Religious Studies Program website for detailed course descriptions of the current semester's topic(s).

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 270 Seminar: (4 Credits)**

The emphasis of this course varies by semester and is designed to allow flexibility in course offerings from visiting scholars and specialists in particular fields. Visit the Religious Studies Program website for detailed course descriptions of the current semester's topic(s).

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 302 Introduction to The New Testament (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Introduces students to issues and themes in the history of the Jesus movement and early Christianity through a survey of the main texts of the canonical New Testament as well as other important early Christian documents. Students are given the opportunity to read most of the New Testament text in a lecture hall setting where the professor provides historical context and focus on significant issues, describes modern scholarly methodologies, and places the empirical material within the larger framework of ancient history and the theoretical study of religion.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 313 Seminar: (4 Credits)**

Emphasis varies by semester and is designed to allow flexibility in course offerings from visiting scholars and specialists in particular fields. Visit the religious studies department website for detailed course descriptions of the current semester's topic(s).

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 335 Introduction to Ancient Indian Literature (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

An introductory course designed to acquaint students with the great works of the ancient Indian literary tradition, a major part of which was written in Sanskrit. The earliest form of that language, called Vedic Sanskrit, is the language of the Vedic hymns, especially those of the Rig Veda. Sanskrit has had an unbroken literary tradition for over 3,000 years. This rich and vast literary, religious, and philosophical heritage is introduced in this course. In addition, students work with excerpts from the Jain and Buddhist canons written in Prakrits and examples of Tamil poetry. Selections from the Vedic literature, classical drama, epics, story literature, and lyric poetry are studied in English translation.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 337 Religions of India (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Investigates religious developments in India within their historical context. Familiarizes students with the religions of the subcontinent—including Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, and Judaism—through secondary source readings and English translations of primary source materials. Rather than survey religious traditions as closed systems divorced from time or place, students grapple with the central theories and historiographical challenges pertaining to religion in India, especially those that impact our ability to understand everyday religious experience, both past and present.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 351 Belief and Social Life in China (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

The Chinese word for religion means ?teaching.? ?Teaching? immediately implies someone else besides the self. Belief in China has always been theorized and practiced as mediated by the presence of others, miraculous and mundane. The class explores what Chinese people ? taught? themselves about the person, society, and the natural world and thus how social life was constructed and maintained. Examines in historical perspective the classic texts of the Taoist and Confucian canon and their synthesis; Buddhist, especially Ch'an (Zen) practices in China; issues of gender in past and present practice; and religion's relation to the state.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 404 Greek and Roman Mythology (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Discusses the myths and legends of Greek mythology and the gods, demigods, heroes, nymphs, monsters, and everyday mortals who played out their parts in this mythology. Begins with creation, as vividly described by Hesiod in the Theogony, and ends with the great Trojan War and the return of the Greek heroes. Special emphasis on the return of Odysseus, as related by Homer in the Odyssey.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

RELST-UA 422 Living a Good Life: Greek and Jewish Perspectives (4 Credits)

Key questions: Does living well require acquiring knowledge and wisdom? What is the place of moral responsibility in the good life? Is the good life a happy life, or does it require sacrificing happiness? Does religion lead to living well or does it hinder it? What is friendship and how does it contribute to the good life? Study of primary texts by Plato, Aristotle, Seneca, Avot, Maimonides, Spinoza, and Hermann Cohen.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 428 Creating a Good Society: Christian and Jewish Perspectives (4 Credits)

This course explores Greek, Christian and Jewish responses to the problem: How does one create a good society? Central questions to be explored include: What is the best form of government? What economic system is ideal? Should the government actively promote a vision of the good life or leave it to individual to decide the good for themselves? Should the government prioritize the freedom, equality, or happiness of its inhabitants? What role should religion and nationhood play in society? What models of education should the government promote? How does gender inform these considerations? The course will focus on careful analysis of primary texts. Thinkers to be studied include: Plato, Maimonides, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Mendelssohn, Marx, Hess. Having first taken the course: Living a Good Life: Greek and Jewish Perspectives is highly desirable.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 432 Religion and Society (4 Credits)

For a very long time, human beings have talked about and gestured toward realms of existence that were somehow fundamentally different than everyday life. These have been realms with powerful beings, mysterious forces, and iron laws which can bestow healing, help, or affliction on those who inhabit the everyday world. Today, we're most likely to associate these planes of existence with "religion," though this is actually a relatively modern concept. People have for centuries debated the truth of particular religions, as well as—and not incidentally—what it might mean for a religion to be true. While these debates show little sign of subsiding, there are at least two ways in which religion is undeniably real: first, in the sense that people really act on their religious convictions and that these results have real consequences; and second, in the sense that religion exists as a concrete set of institutions in contemporary society—organizations, self-identifications, legal categories, and so on. It is these two kinds of religious truth on which this class focuses, bracketing as much as possible questions about other varieties. We'll ask, for example: "What is religion?" "How is it related to other social institutions—government, law, culture, economy, and so on?" "What does it mean to be religious, and what do people get out of religion?" "What are the social consequences of religion? Do certain religions naturally lead to violence, terrorism, oppression, and environmental neglect—or happiness, charity, and prosperity?" "What are some significant contemporary religious trends, and what seems to be driving them?"

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 480 American Religion (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Religious diversity has long been a defining feature of the American landscape. It has also long been perceived as a threat by the nation's most powerful religious actors. This course will examine the history of religious diversity, religious freedom, and religious oppression in the United States. Along the way, we will explore the deep entanglements of religion, race, and politics in the nation's past and present. Special attention will be given to the role of religion in conflicts over colonization, immigration, slavery, and sexuality.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 570 Early Christian Theology: (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall

This seminar provides an opportunity to engage with classic works or central issues in Christian theology. The ideas and arguments developed by the Church Fathers in the formative period of Christianity (c. 100-500 CE) continue to be significant for Christians today, while at the same time they are essential for understanding not only the history of Christianity but also the development of certain modern ideas and institutions. We will examine some of the classic works of early Christian theology or focus on one of various significant theological issues, such as incarnation theology or the problem of wealth and poverty. Topics Vary by terms

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 636 Gods and Profits: Religion and Capitalism (4 Credits)

The course explores the 'enchanted' production and reproduction of capitalism and the effects of capitalism on ever-transforming religious practices. Through a combination of classical and contemporary approaches in political economy, religious studies, and anthropology, we will address what makes capitalism a unique mode of exchange and explore examples of the spirits that haunt the market's invisible hand as well as those that resist its powerful reach. Our readings and discussions will cover important debates surrounding the history and origins of capitalism in Europe; classical anthropological writings on "pre-capitalist" economies encountered during European colonial expansion; and current writings that refuse the distinction between the supposedly separate spheres of religion and the economy.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 637 Religion, Art, and the City (4 Credits)

This course offers a new vantage point on the remarkable city in which we live. We will explore New York through lenses that may be unfamiliar to you, but that have long been essential to its rich diversity and historical complexity: its religion, its art, and those moments when the two have intersected. The course will begin with the big questions: what do we mean when we say art? What do we mean when we say religion? Why do they often seem to be referring to similar sets of ideas and practices? How do museums get us to look at both religion and art in particular ways? We will then move into looking at the city through the lens of religion and art. We will begin with a tour of the signs of Islam that populate lower Manhattan. Following, we will confront the complex interweaving of race, religion, politics, art, and real estate in New York. The final section of the class will look at religion and art beyond institutions. How are urban boundaries made and undone through religion and art? How do religious and artistic practices create alternative spaces in the city? How, following tragedy, has the city memorialized itself through museum practices? In this final section of the class we will pay a visit to the 9/11 museum.

Grading: Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 645 Religion and Media (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course introduces the long-standing and complex connection between religious practices and various media. We'll analyze how human hearing, vision, and the performing body have been used historically to express and maintain religious life through music, voice, images, words, and rituals. Time will then be spent on more recent electronic media such as radio, film, television, video, and the Internet. An anthropological/historical perspective on studying religion is pursued.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 646 Religion, Sexuality & Public Life (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This country was founded on the promise of religious freedom, and yet U.S. laws and policies regulating sexual life derive much of their rationale from specifically religious notions of ?good? versus bad ?sex,? what bodies are ?for,? what kinds of human relationships are valuable. How are we to understand this apparent contradiction? If sexual life is a special case, what makes it so? Finally, what are the implications of this ?exception? for both sexual and religious freedom? Course materials are designed to introduce students to critical approaches to the study of religion in society as well as to familiarize them with important work in the interdisciplinary areas of gender and sexuality studies.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 649 Monsters and Their Humans (4 Credits)

Humanity has long imagined monstrous transformations of ourselves. What do these creatures mean to us, historically and today? What do we think we are becoming? Investigates the supernatural in popular culture through vampires and zombies. Places them in the context of our imagination of the divine through history and ethnography, and also alongside our intimate problems of managing sex, gender, race, and class. The archives of religions, psychologies, philosophy, film, TA, and novels provide rich source material. Requires a short midterm essay and a longer final project, while posting to a forum most weeks.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 650 Topics (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Topics vary by semester. Please see: <http://religiousstudies.as.nyu.edu/page/home>

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: Yes

RELS-T-UA 674 Islam and Politics (4 Credits)

Popular Western perceptions of Islam has often identified the religion with threatening images of theocracy and terrorism. The Iranian revolution of 1979, the rise of Islamic radicalism from West Africa to Southeast Asia, as well as the emergence of the short-lived ISIS "caliphate" have contributed to this impression. While the study of Islam has devoted considerable attention to radical interpretations of the religion, in historical terms, Islam has consisted of varied interpretations, from those that can be described as theocratic to those that voice concerns parallel to Western liberalism. Among the concerns of these voices were issues related to political modernity and the nation-state from theocracy, democracy, guarantees of the rights of women and non-Muslims in Islamic countries, freedom of thought, and belief in the potential for human progress. This course introduces students to the thoughts of late Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries Muslim intellectuals, leaders, and activists representing diverse intellectual and ideological spectrums, and their engagement with religion and political modernity in the Muslim World. We will be reading and discussing the works of these authors. Readings include, but not limited to, the works of al-Tahtawi, Abduh, Afghani, Rashid Ridha, Ali Abd al-Raziq, Hasan al-Banna, Soekarno, Mahmud Taleqani, Natsir, Khomeini, Muhammad Iqbal, Rachid Ghannouchi, Hasan Turabi, Yusuf al-Qaradawi, Ali Shar'iati, Abdulllahi Ahmed al-Na'im, Nurcholis Madjid, Fazlur Rahman, Sayyid Qotb, Osama bin Laden, Amina Wadud. By the end of the course, students will be familiar with the thoughts of the most influential makers of modern Islam.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELS-T-UA 679 Introduction to Judaism (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This class is intended as a basic introduction to Judaism—its history, beliefs, traditions, and ritual practices—as a living religion from its roots in the biblical, intertestamental, rabbinic, and medieval periods until their appearance in the modern world. The course is open to students of all backgrounds and all levels of familiarity (or unfamiliarity) with Judaism. Diverse data from various epochs in Jewish religious history will be drawn together in such a way that the student will be able to assess Jewish beliefs, institutions, and practices throughout the centuries. The aim here will not only be to indicate the seminal role that the Bible and rabbinic writings play in Judaism, but also to explore how these texts have been interpreted and applied over the centuries. Furthermore, continuity and discontinuity will be highlighted so that the student will gain an appreciation of how the Jewish religious tradition has evolved and grown in history.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 681 Modern Jewish History (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

Major developments in the history and culture of the Jews from the 16th to the 20th centuries, emphasizing the meanings of modernity in the Jewish context, differing paths to modern Jewish identity, and internal Jewish debates over the relative merits of modern and traditional Jewish values.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 695 American Jewish History (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Study of the major events and personalities in American Jewish history since colonial times; the waves of Jewish immigration and development of the American Jewish community.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 719 Ancient Egyptian Mythology and Religion (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Focuses on key aspects of Egyptian religion: conceptions of the divine in a polytheistic context, temple ritual, hymns, personal piety, the relationship between religion and magic, mortuary religion and its evolution and material consequences. Questions approached through study of the primary sources in English translation—myths (very broadly conceived), other religious writings (including mortuary texts such as the Book of the Dead and the Underworld books)—and of art and artifacts connected with religious practice, such as amulets and votives.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 728 Women and Gender in Islam (4 Credits)**

Examines the rights, roles, and the physical appearance of Muslim women. This course investigates the complexity of the messages and models relating to gender in one of the world's most influential religious traditions. Beginning with the rise of Islam, the class observes how foundational texts and personalities are interpreted and reinterpreted for changing times.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 781 The Quran and Its Interpretation (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

An introduction to the content, themes and style of the Quran and surveying the diversity of interpretive approaches to the text (legal, mystical, sectarian, literary, and politically engaged) in the medieval and modern periods.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 785 Islamic Law & Society (4 Credits)**

Introduces students to Islamic law through a reading of its various genres and a study of a selection of secondary sources covering a number of substantive topics (for example, ritual, criminal, and public law). Also focuses on the ways Islamic law has interacted with Islamic societies in historical practice and the way it has adapted, or not adapted, to the challenges of modernity.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 807 Dead Sea Scrolls: Judaism & Christianity (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Survey of the importance of the Dead Sea Scrolls for the history of early Judaism and Christianity. Reading and discussion of English translations of the major texts.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 809 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Introduces students to the modern study of the Bible from historical, literary, and archeological points of view. Reading and analysis of texts in translation.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 832 Intro to Buddhism (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

An introduction to this complex religion, emphasizing its history, teachings, and practices. Discusses its doctrinal development in India, then emphasizes certain local practices: Buddhism and the family in China; Buddhism, language, and hierarchy in Japan; the politics of Buddhist Tibet; and Buddhist art. Finally the course touches on Buddhism in the United States.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 835 Tibetan Buddhism (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Identical to EAST-UA 833. Offered periodically. 4 points. An introduction to Tibetan Buddhism doctrine and practice. Approaches the subject from historical and thematic perspectives, beginning with a close study of one of the classic Tibetan guides to Tibetan Buddhism for a solid foundation in the principles of the tradition. Proceeds along a historical track, beginning with the seventh-century arrival of Buddhism in Tibet to the present-day encounter with Western devotees of exiled Tibetan lamas. Topics include doctrinal innovation, ritual, myth, art, sacred geography, revelation, and the role of Buddhism in Tibet's relationship with its neighbors. Readings consist of primary texts in translation and secondary literature on the study of religion and Tibetan Buddhism.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELST-UA 840 Engaging Early Christian Theology (4 Credits)**

What does it mean to say that Jesus Christ was both human and divine? How can the Christian divinity be one yet three? How are the sacraments such as baptism effective? Do we have freewill? These were some of the pressing questions the Church Fathers addressed in the early centuries of Christian history and their answers contributed to the Christian theological tradition for centuries to come. In this course we will examine some of the classic works of early Christian theology. Despite the often highly rhetorical and polemical character of their writings the Church Fathers nevertheless developed an intellectually rigorous field of knowledge, one that has had a significant intellectual historical as well as socio-political impact in the history of the Church. This is not a theological course but rather an introduction to some of the key texts in a historically significant mode of theological inquiry.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

RELS-T-UA 846 Virgins Martyrs Monks & Saints: Early Christianity (4 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

What was it about Christianity that it made it so popular in the ancient world? Was it the martyrs volunteering for public execution? Monks' sexual renunciation? The isolation of hermits living on the tops of columns in the wilderness? Or perhaps orthodoxy and its politically divisive anxieties about heretics and Jews? In fact, all these things (and more) explain how a small Jewish messianic sect from Palestine became the dominant religion of the Roman Empire. This course will provide an introduction to the big questions in the history of early Christianity. The focus will be on early Christian literature, such as martyr texts, saints' lives, and works of monastic spirituality and mysticism. Issues addressed will include the Christian reception of Greco-Roman antiquity, the origins of anti-Semitism, gender and sexuality in the early Church, and the emergence of Christian theology.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 863 Sufis: Mystics in Islam (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Readings in the Sufi poets in translation and reflections of their influence in Persian literature and the European tradition. Sufism as one of the primary manifestations of the Islamic spirit in Iran. The effect of Sufism (the hidden path that leads from the individual to God) on the shape of Islam, on the spirit of Persian literature and art, and on Western religious sensibilities.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 980 Internship (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. 1 to 4 points.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 981 Internship (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. 1 to 4 credits per term.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 983 Topics: (4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

The emphasis of this course varies by semester and is designed to allow flexibility in course offerings from visiting scholars and specialists in particular fields. Visit the Religious Studies Program website for detailed course descriptions of the current semester's topic(s).

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**RELS-T-UA 991 Seminar: (4 Credits)**

The emphasis of this course varies by semester and is designed to allow flexibility in course offerings. Visit the Religious Studies Program website for detailed course descriptions.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 992 Pagan and Christian Mythologies in Antiquity (4 Credits)**

This course focuses on the topics of Greek and Roman lore, early Christian narratives, and the reception of classical genres and themes in Late Antiquity. This is a discussion-based class with weekly readings and a final project. Students will learn: to analyze complex, highly rhetorical texts composed in a cultural context radically different from our own; to consider how the communities behind these texts promoted their own ideas about heroism and moral exemplarity, warfare (both literal and spiritual), and the like; to synthesize, communicate, and expand upon information in a discussion-focused setting.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 997 Independent Study (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. 1 to 4 points.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**RELS-T-UA 998 Independent Study (1-4 Credits)***Typically offered occasionally*

Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. 1 to 4 credits per term.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes**RELS-T-UA 9085 What is Islam? (4 Credits)**

This course explores the origins of Islam and the development of its rituals and doctrines to the 21st century. It assumes no previous background in Islamic studies. Students will learn about topics such as the Koran and the Prophet, Islamic law, the encounter of East and West during the Crusades, and Islam in Britain. They will find out how Muslims in different regions have interpreted and lived their religion in past and present. Readings will include not only scholarly works but also material from primary sources, for example the Koran, biographies and chronicles. The course consists of a combination of lectures, seminar discussions, field trips and includes other media, such as film.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**RELS-T-UA 9360 Religion, Culture, & Politics in Cent Europe (4 Credits)**

This course explores various religious phenomena that formed political ideas and cultural values of Central Europe in different historical periods. Religion is without doubt one of the most important elements that shaped history and contemporary face of this region and mutual interaction of these phenomena is principally evident in cultural richness of Prague. In the course we examine particularly those Central European religious figures and events that remarkably influenced the world's history and enriched human thinking. First, we study Christianization of the Central European countries and the prominent role of religion in political and cultural transformation in medieval period. Then we follow the religious reformation process and development of relationship between Judeo-Christian tradition and the secular world in early modern period. Finally, we explore the situation of religious institutions in totalitarian societies and their struggle against communist regime. The transformation of Catholicism in the 1960s is also examined together with the role of religion in the post-communist and post-modern societies.

Grading: CAS Graded**Repeatable for additional credit:** No

RELST-UA 9613 Religion, Pol & State in Compartv Perspectv (4 Credits)

Ever since the French Revolution, if not before, some of the best minds in the social sciences have been sure that the primacy of religion in modern society was entering its twilight. This view has only accentuated with the end of the Cold War, the "Third Wave of Democratization," and increasing globalization. In fact, we are still waiting for this twilight to appear; religion continues to shape individual values, social organization, state institutions, and international relations – perhaps more than ever before. As a result, the academic literature has been experiencing a revival of religious studies, but not only as its own field of study within the humanities, rather within the lens of the social sciences as well, whether in comparative politics, international relations, sociology, or even economics. The central aim of this course is to examine different theoretical approaches, analytical concepts, and empirical manifestations in the interaction between religion, state, and politics. The course is comparative in three ways, and thusly divided: In the first part of the course, we seek to understand how different social science disciplines study religion. The second part of the course presents different interactions between religion and politics, such as the secularization debate, the compatibility between religion and different types of government, and the role of religion in shaping identity and different types of political organization. The third part of the course will apply these different approaches and concepts to the study of "real world" empirical developments, both historical and contemporary, particularly within the Middle East.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 9671 Magic, Religion & Inquisition (4 Credits)

This course is made up of four sections. The first opens with an analysis of the intellectual foundations of the witch-hunt from late Antiquity to the early Renaissance. The second section concentrates on the most infamous handbook for witch-hunters, *Malleus Maleficarum* ("The Hammer of the Witches") and on the roots of medieval misogyny. The third section looks at the mass witch-hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries on the backdrop of the break between Protestant and Catholic Europe, and examines the connections linking witch-hunting to the momentous social, political and religious changes of the times. In the fourth part, the course will shift focus to the grassroots level, shedding light on the economic and social mechanisms which lead a community to "make a witch".

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

RELST-UA 9672 Mediev Church: Religious Hist of Crisis & Creativ (4 Credits)

Wielding nearly unlimited authority over the lives - and the after-life – of millions of Europeans, the Catholic Church was by far the most important political, as well as cultural, power of the Middle Ages. The only global institution of this era, the Church was at the same time able to nourish strong local roots: its cardinals and popes came from all over the continent and dealt with international politics at the highest level, while priests and friars brought home to the people a faith tied to the neighborhood church and confraternity, and personified by a saint's shrine and relics. Through a combination of lectures, students' presentations, films and site visits, this course will explore selected aspects of the Medieval Church's history: its often rocky relations with the other supreme power of the time, the Holy Roman Empire; the rise of monasticism and its different versions; the spread of heretical movements and their repression by the Inquisition; sainthood, and how "heavenly" women and men could serve to articulate very earthly ideologies on state, society, gender roles.

Grading: CAS Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No