# Department of Religious Studies

## Fall 2018 Undergraduate Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Important Dates</th>
<th>RELS 1200-UOL: World Religions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>August 20</td>
<td><strong>Online/Ashley Bryan</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Student Convocation &amp; First day of evening classes</td>
<td>A study of the historical origins, central teachings, and devotional practices of the major religious traditions alongside those of smaller and newer religious movements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 21</td>
<td>– <strong>Cultural or Historical Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First day of daytime classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 27</td>
<td>RELS 2000-001: Out of this World: Fantastic Journeys to Heaven, Hell, and the Ends of the Earth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to register, add, drop with no grade</td>
<td><strong>MWF 11:15-12:05/John Reeves</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 3</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labor Day - No Classes</td>
<td>– <strong>Historical or Textual Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 17</td>
<td>RELS 2000-002: Elementary Biblical Hebrew I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deadline to apply for December 2018 graduation</td>
<td><strong>MWF 12:20-1:10/John Reeves</strong> (Cross-Listed with LACS 1201)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8</td>
<td>This course is the first half of an introduction to biblical Hebrew which normally encompasses multiple semesters of study. We will master the ‘aleph-bet,’ build vocabulary, and learn the rudiments of classical Hebrew grammar. During the final weeks of the semester, we will begin reading some simple narrative and verse selections drawn from the Bible itself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring 2019 schedule available</td>
<td>– <strong>Textual Analysis</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 8 &amp; 9</td>
<td>RELS 2000-003: Creationism, the Bible, and Human Origins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Classes</td>
<td><strong>MWF 9:05-9:55/Joanne Robinson &amp; Jon Marks</strong> (Cross-Listed with ANTH 2090)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 22</td>
<td>Creation stories help us to understand our place in the universe, and evolution is our scientific origin story. In this course we explore the recurrent rejection of human evolution in favor of biblical literalism over the last century and a half. Various versions of creationism will be presented, including natural theology, young-earth creationism, old-earth creationism, intelligent design, and non-Christian origin narratives. We will discuss various interpretations of Genesis and of evolution, what constitutes science, what constitutes religion, and their contested zones of overlap.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Last day to withdraw from course(s)</td>
<td>– <strong>Cultural or Historical Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>RELS 2000-004: Religion and Culture in Polynesia and Oceania</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration for Spring 2019 begins</td>
<td><strong>TR 1:00-2:15/Ashley Bryan</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21-24</td>
<td>Religious beliefs and cultural practices found throughout Polynesia and Oceania will be the focus of this course. Films, current events, and historical accounts will all be utilized to comprehensively study this utterly fascinating and underappreciated region of the world.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thanksgiving Break- No Classes</td>
<td>– <strong>Cultural or Historical Analysis</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>December 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last Day of Classes</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reading Day</td>
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<td>December 7-13</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Exams</td>
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<td>December 14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Summer 2019 schedule available</td>
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<tr>
<td>December 14</td>
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<td>Commencement</td>
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ELRS 2000-005: Chinese Religions  
**MWF 12:20-1:10/Janna Shedd**  
An introduction to China's religious traditions from ancient oracle bone divination practices to the modern day cult of Mao and the rapid growth of Christianity. This course will explore the cultural and historical developments of many interconnected topics, including ancestral veneration, Chinese Buddhist schools, Daoism (Taoism), folk traditions, health practices, and popular devotion to China's many gods and immortals.  
- Cultural Analysis

ELRS 2000-006: Life in the Middle Ages  
**MWF 12:20-1:10/Hugh Goforth**  
(Cross-Listed with HIST 2230)  
Discussion of the socio-economic underpinnings of the Medieval World with a focus on the daily life of and interactions between nobles and commoners. Topics include: war and chivalry, feudalism and manorialism, law and justice, organized and folk religion, arts and education, and the rise of the city.  
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

ELRS 2000-007: Magic in Medieval Europe  
**MWF 1:25-2:15/Hugh Goforth**  
(Cross-Listed with HIST 2231)  
Magic is in some ways a modern concept. In the ancient Near East and Europe, what we now call magical practices, existed as mundane, unexceptional aspects of shared culture. As Christianity gradually took its place as a dominant cultural force, in Medieval Europe, many common—and sometime uncommon—practices increasingly fell under suspicion as "superstition", ignorance, error, sinful, dangerous and even, eventually, conspiratorial and diabolical. This course examines the processes through which "magic" develops into an increasingly feared and persecuted category.  
- Historical Analysis

ELRS 2104-UOL: Hebrew Scriptures/Old Testament  
**Online/Barbara Thiede**  
There is no such thing as "The Bible." But 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 will learn about the Ancient Israelites to help us understand the texts they produced and we will explore the writers’ sense of humor and political agendas. Students will explore how later readers re-imagined biblical narratives and created whole new characters that never existed in the Hebrew!  
- Historical or Textual Analysis

**TR 10:00-11:15/David Clausen**  
Some of our earliest sources documenting the origins of the Christian faith are to be found 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 competing beliefs that sometimes sat uneasily beside one another in the early church and the New Testament. Our probing into Christian origins will consider such questions as: Why are the gospels so similar and yet so different? What are the obstacles for rediscovering the historical Jesus? Why was Paul so controversial among the apostles of the early church?  
- Historical or Textual Analysis

ELRS 2131-001: Islam  
**MWF 12:20-1:10/Kathryn Johnson**  
(Cross-Listed with HIST 2215)  
An introduction to the practices and doctrines shared by the world’s 1.6 billion Muslims and the history of Muslim societies. Subjects explored include the development of the Sunni and Shi’i traditions, modern Islamist reform movements, and Islam in the United States.  
- Historical or Textual Analysis

ELRS 2216-001: The Modern Middle East  
**MWF 10:10-11:00/Kathryn Johnson**  
(Cross-Listed with HIST 2216)  
We’ll begin our study of the history of the modern Middle East in the WWI period and conclude with an examination of current issues confronting the region. Topics covered include the history of the Arab/Israeli/Palestinian conflict, the long term impact of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and the role of the Islamic State (ISIS) in regional instability.  
- Cultural or Historical Analysis
RELS 2600-001: Orientation to the Study of Religion  
*Tuesday 2:30-5:15/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.

RELS 3000-001: India, Bollywood, and Religion  
*TR 11:30-12:45/Ashley Bryan*  
(Cross-Listed with FILM 3051)
This course will examine how “Bollywood” – the world’s largest cinema industry – portrays and reveals key aspects of religious traditions found on the Indian subcontinent. Religious experiences and perspectives with regards to communalism, caste politics, gender constructs, and family structures are just some of the topics that will be analyzed. Knowledge of any South Asian language is not required as all films will have English subtitles.  
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 3000-002: The Bible & Homosexuality  
*TR 2:30-3:45/Kent Brintrnall*  
(Cross-Listed with WGST 3050)
This course will consider a wide range of biblical texts that are referenced in political, cultural, and theological arguments concerning homosexuality, lesbian and gay civil rights, and same-sex marriage. We will be interested in how both pro-gay and anti-gay interpreters engage biblical texts and invoke biblical authority, rather than determining which views are ‘right’ or ‘wrong’.  
- Cultural or Textual Analysis

RELS 3000-003: History of Jerusalem  
*MWF 1:25-2:15/Shimon Gibson*  
(Cross-Listed with HIST 3002)
This course will deal with the exploration of the urban development and cultural diversification of a city associated with the three main religions of the world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Jerusalem traditionally saw the development of official Jewish worship at the Temple, Jesus’ crucifixion and burial, and Muhammad’s ascension at al-Aqsa. Selected topics will include nineteenth century research and modern archaeological work, as well as an appreciation of the overall architecture of the city, the key monuments, and its material culture. Pertinent historical textual sources and the results of up-to-date archaeological excavations in the city will also be addressed. The overall history and archaeology of Jerusalem will be examined beginning with introductory lectures on the following aspects: location, topography, water sources, building materials. The history of archaeological work in the city will be provided from the outset, beginning with the exploration work of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, associated with figures such as Charles Wilson and Charles Warren. The goal of the course is to provide the student with an overall historical and archaeological view of one of the most exciting cities in the world.  
- Historical Analysis

RELS 3000-004: Magic, Science, and Faith: Ethnographic Approaches to Religion and Healing  
*TR 1:00-2:15/Letha Victor*  
(Cross-Listed with ANTH 3090)
The historical meaning and significance of the Holocaust will be explored, with particular emphasis on oral testimony. Through readings and discussions, we will analyze and discuss the behavior and perspectives of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators—and also our own perspectives, as students of the Holocaust. After reading what historians have written about the Nazi genocide, student teams will research the USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s collection of survivor testimonies.  
- Cultural Analysis

RELS 3000-090: Legacy of the Holocaust  
*Monday 5:30-8:15/Judy LaPietra*  
(Cross-Listed with HGHR 3050)
The historical meaning and significance of the Holocaust will be explored, with particular emphasis on oral testimony. Through readings and discussions, we will analyze and discuss the behavior and perspectives of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators—and also our own perspectives, as students of the Holocaust. After reading what historians have written about the Nazi genocide, student teams will research the USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s collection of survivor testimonies.  
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 3001-001: Muslims and the Making of America (W)  
*TR 10:00-11:15/William Sherman*  
(Cross-Listed with HIST 3000)
This course explores the history of Islam in North America with special emphasis on the diverse experiences of Muslims in the United States. Muslims have been critical participants in the construction of American identity from the 16th century when enslaved Muslims were forcibly brought to Colonial America. We will explore diverse topics such as: Islam among enslaved, immigrant, and refugee communities; Malcolm X and the Nation of Islam; Sufi punk rock and Five Percenter hip-hop and rap; women prayer leaders; Islamophobia and contemporary American politics. Throughout our course, we will develop the skills to write and communicate possible answers to three guiding questions: how do racial, religious, and national identities converge and overlap for Muslims in America? How have Muslims in America variously understood and imagined “authority” and “authenticity”? And how have the practices and ideas of Muslims in America resonated across the globe?  
- Textual Analysis
REL 3116-001: Paul
TR 11:30-12:45/David Clausen
Paul, self-proclaimed “apostle to the Gentiles,” was and remains a most controversial figure in Christianity. The “new perspective” on Paul seeks to understand this gifted, first-century missionary and theologian not as the creator of a new religion but as a re-interpreter of Judaism in light of his understanding of the person and meaning of Christ. We will explore Paul's life and mission, writings and rhetoric, challenges and legacy. Along the way we will become familiar with the world of Paul: the customs, cultures, politics, and locations which provide the background for understanding his life and times.
- Historical or Textual Analysis

REL 3137-001: Religion in the African American Experience
MWF 11:15-12:05/Julia Robinson Moore
(Cross-Listed with AFRS 3050 & HIST 3000)
Designed to introduce students to the evolution of black religious thought and culture in America from 1865 to the present. The religious traditions of Voodoo, Santeria, Christianity, Islam and the Nation of Islam are points of emphasis in the course. Issues of race, class, gender, identity, and violence will be points of discussion in light of black religious life.
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

REL 3150-001: African-American Church and Civil Rights
MWF 1:25-2:15/Julia Robinson Moore
(Cross-Listed with AFRS 3150 & HIST 3000)
Designed to introduce students to the historical beginnings of the local African American church within the Baptist and A.M.E denominations, this course investigates how African Americans forms of Christianity, as it was practiced in local black churches, shaped black political protest in the twentieth century. The activism of local black churches during the Modern Civil Rights Movement will be central points of investigation. African American Christian social constructions of sacrifice and ideas of the sacred will also constitute key foci through out the progression of this class.
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

REL 3215-001: Religion and Sexuality
TR 11:30-12:45/Kent Brintnall
(Cross-Listed with WGST 3215)
This course explores a representative sample of major religious traditions to explore different frames for thinking religiously about sexuality. It also considers some theoretical tools for thinking about sexuality and its complexities. Finally, it examines a range of case studies and texts that help tease out the relationship between religion and sexuality.
- Cultural Analysis

REL 4000-001: From Catastrophe to Cash: The Marketing of the Holocaust
MW 4:00-5:15/Barbara Thiede
Tourists sign up for tours to concentration camps and mass gravesites. Filmmaker and movi egoers now choose from a variety of Holocaust-themed films or memes. Children’s literature on the Holocaust has emerged as a field in its own right, supporting the curricula planned, presented, discussed and published. Memorial sites include the requisite museum shops on the property once marked by barracks and gas chambers. This course will explore the marketing of the Holocaust in modern culture. From archetypical scenes of dead and skeletal bodies to fictional revenge narratives: In what ways has modern western capitalist culture permitted, supported, and encouraged profit-making, merchandizing, and marketing of mass murder?
- Cultural Analysis

REL 4000-002: Dead Sea Scrolls and Early Christianity
TR 1:00-2:15/James Tabor
What are the significant similarities and differences between the various kinds of Messianic expectations one finds in the Dead Sea Scrolls and those of the Jesus movement and earliest Christianity? Social, political, and cultural differences will also be examined in the light of both texts and material/archaeological evidence. Finally, how do these movements within late 2nd Temple Judaism contribute to the emergence of orthodox emergent forms of Judaism and Christianity.
- Historical or Textual Analysis

REL 4000-003: Material Cultures of Religion
Thursday 2:30-3:15/Alex Kaloyanides
This seminar examines the religious lives of things. We will read and discuss prominent scholarship on the study of religion and material culture, and students will develop original research projects around a religious object or set of objects of their choosing. Many readings will focus on the role objects play in Asian religious communities, but we will also be considering material cultures from a wider range of religious traditions.
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

REL 4000-004: Foucault
TR 11:30-12:45/Gordon Hull
(Cross-Listed with PHIL 4190)
From the early 1960s until his death in 1984, Michel Foucault was one of the most innovative and influential figures in French philosophy. Known most fundamentally for the thesis that our most basic categories of thought are inescapably the products of their social and institutional environments, Foucault wrote about such topics as the emergence of a clinical understanding of insanity, the change in punishment theory from the dungeon to intensive surveillance; the emergence of power as a force for fostering life and managing populations; the emergence of “sexuality” as a marker of identity; and the transformation of economic thought from classical, laissez faire liberalism to the intensely interventionist theory of today’s neoliberalism. Not surprisingly, given the range of his thought, Foucault’s influence today extends into such diverse fields as philosophy, sociology, criminal justice, literary theory, and queer and feminist theory. In this course, we will read a number of Foucault’s most important works, with attention both to the questions they enable us to ask and to prominent criticisms of his work.
- Cultural or Historical Analysis
RELS 4000-005: Churches and Temples as Neuro-Performance Spaces  
TR 4:00-5:15/Mark Pizzato  
(Cross-Listed with THEA 4001)  
This course explores how the architecture, artworks, and performances in religious spaces reflect specific traditions—and the inner theatre of the visitor's brain.  
- Cultural or Textual Analysis

RELS 4000-090: The Devil  
Monday 5:30-8:15/Eric Hoenes  
A cross-cultural investigation of the ultimate personification of evil and moral corruption—namely, the Devil. This class examines how radical evil came to be personified in Christianity, as well as how the Devil has been invoked in religious texts, political imaginaries, and ritual practices in the modern world.  
- Cultural Analysis

**Liberal Studies Courses:** Religious Studies faculty teach the following courses for the General Education Program:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Instructor</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LBST 2101-Q08-Q11</td>
<td>Western History &amp; Culture - What is Identity?</td>
<td>Sean McCloud</td>
<td>MW 10:10-11:00, Break out sessions on Friday at 9:05, 10:10, 11:15 &amp; 1:25</td>
<td>*For incoming Freshmen only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LBST 2101-335: Western History &amp; Culture - Religion and Magic</td>
<td>Barbara Thiede</td>
<td>MWF 1:25-2:15</td>
<td>TR 8:30-9:45/James Tabor</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2101-336: Western History &amp; Culture - Death and Afterlife</td>
<td>James Tabor</td>
<td>TR 8:30-9:45</td>
<td>TR 8:30-9:45/James Tabor</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2102-335: Global Connections - Globalizing Asian Religions</td>
<td>Janna Shedd</td>
<td>Hybrid/WF 2:30-3:45</td>
<td>TR 8:30-9:45/Janna Shedd</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2102-336: Global Connections - Globalizing Asian Religions</td>
<td>Janna Shedd</td>
<td>Hybrid/WF 4:00-5:15</td>
<td>TR 8:30-9:45/Janna Shedd</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2102-337: Global Connections - Middle East in the 21st Century</td>
<td>Kathryn Johnson</td>
<td>MWF 8:00-8:50</td>
<td>TR 8:30-9:45/Janna Shedd</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2102-339: Global Connections - Religious and Cultural Expressions in Asian Cinema</td>
<td>Ashley Bryan</td>
<td>TR 2:30-3:45</td>
<td>TR 2:30-3:45/Ashley Bryan</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2301-335: Critical Thinking and Communication - The Ecological Citizen</td>
<td>Tina Katsanos</td>
<td>TR 11:30-12:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2301-337: Critical Thinking and Communication - A Good Life: What is it? How does one live it?</td>
<td>Celia Sinclair</td>
<td>Monday 4:00-6:45</td>
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<tr>
<td>LBST 2301-341: Critical Thinking and Communication - A Good Life: What is it? How does one live it?</td>
<td>Celia Sinclair</td>
<td>Tuesday 5:30-8:15</td>
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For more information visit [www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu](http://www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu)