### Introduction to World Religions

**RELS 1200-001**

**Title:** Introduction to World Religions  
**Online:** Ashley Bryan  
**Description:** A study of the historical origins, central teachings, and devotional practices of the major religious traditions alongside those of smaller and newer religious movements. - Cultural or Historical Analysis

### Religion and Culture in Polynesia and Oceania.

**RELS 2000-001**

**Title:** Religion and Culture in Polynesia and Oceania.  
**Online:** Ashley Bryan  
**Description:** 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. - Cultural or Historical Analysis

### The Qur’an

**RELS 2000-002**

**Title:** The Qur’an  
**TR:** 11:30-12:45/Will Sherman  
**Description:** What is the Qur'an? This course offers an introduction to the academic study of the Qur'an and its place in Muslim communities. After beginning with an exploration of the history of the Qur'an, this course will focus upon a number of ethical, aesthetic, and theological themes. This course will give particular attention to the diversity of interpretations that Muslims (and non-Muslims) find in the Qur'an through art, architecture, exegesis, and other means. - Historical & Textual Analysis

### Religion in Latin America

**RELS 2000-003**

**Title:** Religion in Latin America  
**TR:** 2:30-3:45/Eric Hoenes  
**Cross-Listed with:** LTAM 2001-A01  
**Description:** This course will examine the richness and diversity of Latin American religions, paying special attention to how the intercultural encounters between Indigenous Americans, Africans, and Europeans have shaped identities, practices, and institutions in the region. - Cultural & Historical Analysis

### Introduction to Biblical Hebrew I

**RELS 2000-004**

**Title:** Introduction to Biblical Hebrew I  
**TR:** 11:30-12:45/John Reeves  
**Cross-Listed with:** LACS 1201-001  
**Description:** 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. - Textual Analysis

### Introduction to African American Religions in the 19th Century

**RELS 2000-005**

**Title:** Introduction to African American Religions in the 19th Century  
**Online:** Julia Moore  
**Cross-listed with:** AFRS 2050-001 & HIST 2000-A01  
**Description:** What religions did African slaves practice in America? How did slaves create their own religion in a culture where they were considered chattel property? This course is designed to introduce students to the religious experiences of African slaves in America during the nineteenth century. Race and resistance will be points of exploration. - Cultural or Historical Analysis
REL 2000-006
African American Christianity
Online/Julia Moore
(Cross-listed with AFRS 2050-002, HIST 2000-A04)
How did the local black church begin in America? Why did African Americans embrace the religion of their slave masters? This course is designed to introduce students to the historical and religious formations of African American Christianity from the Reconstruction era through the early part of the twentieth century. A key component of this course addresses the role of myth, ritual, and sacrifice within African American Christianity. (Cross-lists with AFRS 2050-002 and HIST 2000-A04).
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

REL 2000-007
Death and the Afterlife in Asia
WF 2:30-3:45/Janna Shedd
This course is an introduction to religious concepts of death and death-related practices in South and East Asian religions. Students will explore Asia's wide variety of funerary practices, beliefs in other-worlds, ghost stories, festivals, and the gods and goddesses of death.
- Cultural or Textual Analysis

REL 2000-008
Religion and Food
MWF 10:10-11:00/Prea Persaud
The study of food can reveal the beliefs, practices, and values a tradition holds dear. This course explores the relationship between religion and food by examining the role food plays in various religious traditions as well as the construction of food as an ethical category. We will read religious myths relating to food, discuss food and ritual, the way food is used to shape gender and social roles, and the ways in which food is used as a tool or indicator of morality.
- Cultural Analysis

REL 2000-009
Magic and Religion
Online/Barbara Thiede
Ancient incantations and adjurations, spells and amulets, magic words, prophecy, divination – in what ways can do religious practices, ideas and ritual intersect with magic? To answer these questions (or, at least, try to), we'll begin by studying what “religion” and “magic” mean for scholars. Then we’ll explore how magic and religion overlap in both ancient and modern societies – including some of our own time.
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

REL 2000-011
Magic in Medieval and Early Modern Europe, 500-1700
MWF 2:30-3:45 Hugh Goforth
(Cross-listed with HIST 2231-001)
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

REL 2000-012
Religion and the Body
MWF 11:15-12:05/Sam Davis
In this course we will examine concepts, symbols, and practices of the body in global religious traditions and cultures. We will discuss the relationship of religious belief and its embodiment in ritual practice; the role religion plays in social constructions of sexuality; gender roles and the body broadly speaking; as well as contemporary ethical issues surrounding religiously influenced cultural notions of the body.
- Cultural or Textual Analysis

REL 2000-013
Queering Religious Spaces in Film
MWF 12:20-1:10/Aman Agah / Cross-lists with WGST 2050-006
In this course students will explore the connection between queer stories and religion. Students will view films from queer perspectives following characters who navigate a balance between their religious community, personal spirituality, and their sexuality. Additionally, students will explore the history of queer characters, and those coded as queer, in religious cinematic stories. In conjunction with films, students will gain an understanding of queer theory as well as various religious interpretations of sexuality and gender. Films will be viewed from a critical lens, using an understanding of film technique to interpret multiple meanings.
- Cultural or Textual Analysis

REL 2010-001
Introduction to Western Religions
TR 11:00-2:15/Tina Katsanos
This course will examine the historical origins of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam and the impact of globalization on their pre-modern, modern, and post-modern articulations. Special emphasis is placed on each tradition's response(s) to global environmental degradation and climate change.
- Historical Analysis

REL 2102-002
Introduction to Asian Religions
WF 4:00-5:15/Janna Shedd
This course is an introduction to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism (Taoism). We will cover many of the major fundamental concerns, myths, gods, and practices of these religions both in their classical formulations and in their contemporary forms.
- Cultural or Textual Analysis
RELS 2000-010
Life in the Middle Ages
MWF 9:05-9:55/Hugh Goforth
(Cross-listed with HIST 2301-001)
Discussion of the socio-economic underpinnings of the medieval world, with a focus on the daily life 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

RELS 2104-001
Hebrew Scripture/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 explore the writers' sense of humor and political agendas and discover how later readers reinvented biblical texts. -Historical or Textual Analysis

RELS 2105-001
MWF 12:20-1:10/ David Clausen
Our earliest written sources about the Christ-faith are contained 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 various ways in which they understood the Christ-event. We will consider such questions as: Why are the gospels so similar in some respects and yet so different in others? What are the obstacles for rediscovering the historical Jesus? What was Paul's real message and why was it so often challenged? -Historical or Textual Analysis

RELS 2120-001
Christianity
TR 10:00-11:15/Eric Hones
What is Christianity? How has the idea of what being Christian means changed over time and across cultures? This course will survey the global development of the Christian tradition from antiquity to the present, paying special attention to the diversity of Christian communities' beliefs and practices. -Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 2131-001
Islam
TR 8:30-9:45/Kathryn Johnson
(Cross-Listed with HIST 2215-001)
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 Islamic reform movements, and Islam in the United States.
- Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 2157-001
Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia
T 11:30-12:45/Alex Kaloyanides
This course examines Buddhist traditions of South and Southeast Asia. We will cover material from ancient India through contemporary Southeast Asia, with special attention to reading classical Buddhist texts and studying the Theravada tradition and its cultural, political, artistic, and economic contexts. Course topics include early Buddhist poetry and sculpture, scripture, Buddhist monasticism, European colonialism, ritual, gender, and the insight meditation movement.
- Historical or Textual Analysis

RELS 2600-001
Orientation to the Study of Religion
T 2:30-5:15/Prea Persaud
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. - Oral and Writing intensive

RELS 3000-001
India, Religion, and Bollywood
TR TR 1:00-2:15/Ashley Bryan
(Cross-Listed with FILM 3051-003)
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
Legacy of the Holocaust
Online/ Judy LaPietra
(Cross-Listed with HGR 3500-002)
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.
- Historical or Textual Analysis
The growth of Islam from an obscure Arabian trader to control of a large empire happened in the course of a single century. Christianity spread into new locales, Islam was born and flourished, China underwent a civil war, African kingdoms receded and new nations took shape in central Asia. All of these events were related to one another, shaping the world which would develop. - Historical or Textual Analysis

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. 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. 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.

This course will explore the legal history of “freedom of religion” in the United States from the colonial era to contemporary controversies over same-sex marriage and abortion. Our focus will be on the First Amendment, including its origins and the development of the constitutional concepts of free exercise and nonestablishment of religion.

This course explores the history of Islam in North America. 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; Five Percenters, hip-hop: gender and sexuality; Islamophobia and contemporary American politics.

This class will focus on issues related to the integration of new technologies into research in the humanities. Students will be able to further explore the subject by participating as researchers in our ongoing human trafficking project during the semester.

The Christian church has been the most powerful religious, political, social, cultural, economic, and intellectual institution in the history of Western civilization. Yet the Christian movement did not start out as a culturally significant phenomenon; it began in a remote part of the Roman Empire as a small, lower-class group of followers of a Jewish apocalyptic preacher, crucified as an enemy of the state. How did Christianity become the preferred religion of a Roman emperor and grow to embrace an empire? Trace the early centuries of Christianity from Christ to Constantine.

Paul, self-proclaimed “apostle to the Gentiles,” was and remains a most controversial figure in Christianity. The latest perspective on Paul seeks to understand this gifted, first-century missionary and theologian not as the creator of a new religion but as a devout Jew who felt divinely chosen to bring the Gentiles to a right standing with the God of Israel before the return of Messiah Jesus. 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

A quest for the historical Mary, mother of Jesus and other marginalized or forgotten women of earliest Christianity such as, Mary Magdalene, Mary and Martha of Bethany, Mary wife of Clopas, Joanna, Susanna, Priscilla, and Lydia. - Historical or Textual Analysis

The Book of Ruth, the Book of Esther, Song of Songs and the Book of Lamentations present the reader with powerful female characters and archetypes. We’ll explore the historical context, literary themes, and theological assumptions of these texts while interrogating their representation of female characters. Cross lists with WGST 4050-005, RELS 5000-002, WGST 5050-004 and MALS 6000-001.

- Historical or Textual Analysis

- Cultural or Historical Analysis

- Historical or Textual Analysis

- Cultural Analysis

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This seminar explores the roles that sensory experiences play in religious lives and in the study of religion. Together we will think about religious sounds, sights, tastes, touches, and smells. We will ask: How do religious communities produce particular sensory experiences? How do sensations produce forms of religion?
- Cultural or Textual Analysis

REL 4000-005
Advanced Biblical Hebrew I
TR 1:00-2:15 / John Reeves
(Cross-listed with RELS 5000-005)
This course engages in a critical reading and translation of biblical, non-biblical, and postbiblical Hebrew prose and poetic texts. For the fall semester, we will concentrate on narrative and oracular passages culled from biblical prophetic literature.
- Textual Analysis

REL 4600-001
Senior Seminar
T 2:30-5:15 / Letha Victor
Senior Seminar is the capstone course for religious studies majors. What is it that you do in religious studies? What is “religion” and how does one identify a “religious” object, event, or practice? What is the difference between the training one receives in religious studies and the training offered in seminaries or divinity schools? Through a critical evaluation of recently published books in the field of “religious studies,” we will map and articulate possible answers to the questions above.
- Oral and writing intensive

For more information visit, religiousstudies.uncc.edu

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