

Department of Religious Studies

2019 Summer 1 Undergraduate Courses

NOTE: Some courses below are fully online. Online courses require students to be independent learners. Students need to be strongly motivated to work independently through online materials and meet weekly assignment deadlines. Students will need reliable Internet access to complete work through the course Canvas site.



RELS 2000-080: The Supernatural and American Culture

Online/Sean McCloud

(Cross-Listed with AMST 2050)

Despite claims that modernity is a realm of disenchantment, contemporary American culture continues to be haunted by ghosts, possessed by demons, and visited by alien others. In this course, we examine some of the multiple appearances and meanings of the supernatural in American culture. In this course, we will not be interested in assessing the “reality” of any supernatural entities. Instead, we will focus intensely on trying to unveil the “work” that such entities do in cultural, political, individual, and social spheres. In other words, the beliefs and practices surrounding the supernatural in American culture have effects for both individuals and groups of people. In this class we will read scholarship which examines how the supernatural both reflects and works to shape the cultural field and those who interact within it.

- *Cultural or Textual Analysis*



RELS 2000-082: Religions of Polynesia

Online/Ashley Bryan

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*

RELS 2154-081: Hinduism

Online/Prea Persaud



This course introduces students to the wide variety of Hindu beliefs and practices in both India and in the Hindu diaspora. In addition to learning about the texts, rituals, and philosophy of Hinduism, we will discuss the problems of defining Hinduism, the impact of colonialism, the international appeal of yoga and Ayurvedic medicine, the rise of Hindu nationalism, and guru movements which exist on the fringe of Hinduism and ‘spiritualism.’ - *Cultural Analysis*

RELS 3000-083: A Journey Into Buddhism

Online/Janna Shedd

This class will survey the history, philosophies, and practices of Buddhism across Asia, with special emphasis on the religion’s cultural diversity. Topics will include the life of the historical Buddha; Buddhist theories of no-self and rebirth; applied morality; monastic lifestyles; practices such as meditation and ritual; and Buddhist supernatural beings. We will examine these and other topics in



their local cultural contexts so that students will have the opportunity to compare regional differences in Buddhist beliefs and lived traditions.

- *Cultural or Textual Analysis*

RELS 4000-001/5000-001: Ghosts in Film and Theater

MTR 2:00-4:30/Mark Pizzato

(Cross-Listed with THEA 4001-001 and FILM 3051-001)

This course explores connections between our brain’s ‘inner theatre’ and various cultural manifestations of spirits in drama and film. We will consider recent films related to the vengeful ghosts in Aeschylus’ Oresteia (an ancient Greek trilogy), the romantic spirits in Kana-mi/Zeami’s Matsukaze (a Japanese Noh play), the

demanding patriarchal ghost in Shakespeare’s Hamlet (an early modern touchstone), and the communal spirits in Thornton Wilder’s Our Town (a modern American classic).

- *Cultural Analysis*

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

- **LBST 2101-R80: Death and The Afterlife**
Online/James Tabor
- **LBST 2101-R81: Magic**
Online/Barbara Thiede
- **LBST 2102-R80: Globalizing Asian Religions**
Online/Janna Shedd
- **LBST 2102-R81: Sugar Slaves: Indentureship in Mauritius, South Africa, and the Caribbean**
Online/Prea Persaud

Department of Religious Studies

2019 Summer 2 Undergraduate Courses

NOTE: The courses below are fully online. Online courses require students to be independent learners. Students need to be strongly motivated to work independently through online materials and meet weekly assignment deadlines. Students will need reliable Internet access to complete work through the course Canvas site.



RELS 1200-080: World Religions

Online/Ashley Bryan

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*



RELS 2000-080: Namaste, America: Gurus and Yoga in the United States

Online/Prea Persaud

This course reviews the history of gurus and yoga in the U.S. We will look at the transcendental movement; the connection between race, religion, and citizenship; the controversies surrounding American gurus; and the growing popularity of yoga. -*Cultural or Historical Analysis*



RELS 2000-081: Disability and Religion

Online/Zannah Kimbrel

(Cross-Listed with ANTH 2020-081 & WGST 2050-082)

What causes disability? Demon possession? Divine punishment for past transgressions? Or something else all together? And why do we feel the need to know? This course will look at different religious, cultural, and historical conceptions of disability. The class will also investigate contrasting theoretical approaches to the study of disability.

RELS 2000-082: Horror and The Holy

Online/Agah Aman

(Cross Listed with FILM 3051-082)

This course examines the use of religion and spirituality in the genre of horror film. Students will view and interpret films covering topics including stigmata, exorcisms, jinn, golems, and more. Additionally, students will explore the use of religion and religious themes in classic horror narratives surrounding characters like Dracula and Frankenstein. Students will learn to watch films with a critical perspective and discuss the ways in which religion influences ideas of the unknown and the terrifying.

- *Cultural or Textual Analysis*



RELS 2102-080 Introduction to Asian Religions

Online/Janna Shedd

This course is intended to introduce students to several religions of Asia: Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Shinto. The goal of this course is to familiarize students with some of the main ideas, myths, visual symbols, ethics, and historical developments of these religions. By the end of the course, students will be able to identify some major religious figures, symbols, and regional variations by sight; explain core concepts of each religion; and be able to attempt informed interpretations or predictions of current and mythic events based on knowledge of the histories and cosmologies of each religion. Course readings will be assigned bi-weekly and will include a variety of materials including films, images, myths, textbook chapters, and instructor-produced introductions and explanations of topics.

- *Cultural or Textual Analysis*

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

LBST 2102-R81: Global Connections: Sugar Slaves: Indentureship in Mauritius, South Africa and the Caribbean *Online/Prea Persaud*

LBST 2102-R83: Global Connections: Indigenous Lifeways

Online/Tina Katsanos

LBST 2102-R80: Global Connections: Globalizing Asian Religions

Online/Janna Shedd

For more information visit www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu