

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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The Department of Religious Studies offers a master of arts (MA) degree in Religious Studies, as well as a graduate certificate in Religious Studies, a graduate certificate in Religion and International Affairs, and a specialized graduate certificate in World Religions. We are major contributors, together with the Iliff School of Theology and other schools and departments at DU, to a doctor of philosophy (PhD) degree in the Study of Religion.

Why pursue an MA in Religious Studies at the University of Denver?

The Department of Religious Studies offers graduate students the opportunity to study with its distinguished faculty in a program that emphasizes breadth and depth. Religious Studies faculty members are well published and have won several distinguished teaching awards. They have served in leadership roles in national learned societies and have received grants from the National Endowment for the Humanities, the American Council of Learned Societies, and the Guggenheim Foundation.

The program provides students with a substantive grounding in the major religious traditions of the world, as well as training in the field of religious studies. Through the areas of specialization, it provides students with the opportunity to develop a specific and scholarly expertise in one of the following particular fields of interest: Sacred Texts, Critical Theory and Religion, Religion and International Studies, Philosophy of Religion, and Lived Religions. Students can use these areas of specializations to deepen their own expertise in a particular area while preparing for thesis work, completing a journal article, undertaking comprehensive exams, or developing a project in applied religious studies.

A remote synchronous online option for students is available nested in the MA in Religious Studies for students following the program's Critical Theory track. In addition to studying religion through the lens of the modern European approach to critical theory, this area of specialization focuses on critical topics including race, class, gender, ethnicity, and globalization. Students in the nested online option will take two live lecture courses offered on Zoom each quarter. These courses, also taken by on-campus students, are planned to meet both the core requirements for the MA in Religious Studies and the requirements for the critical theory specialization. Each of the two courses offered on Zoom are set to meet once per week in the late afternoon to early evening, in order to provide flexibility to students with full-time day jobs or other daytime responsibilities. Students pursuing the online option may switch to attend courses on campus at any point during their program. These students are also eligible for the same funding opportunities as their on-campus colleagues.

As part of broader University aims to support interdisciplinary work and internationalization (study and research abroad), the Department of Religious Studies expects students to embrace multiple disciplinary perspectives. It encourages students to enrich their graduate studies by taking courses in other departments and to work with faculty outside Religious Studies. For example, students in the MA program routinely take graduate-level courses in Anthropology, International Studies, Philosophy and Art History. Similarly, students in the MA program are encouraged to pursue advanced language training in the language(s) of their sub-field as well as modern research languages. Finally, the Department encourages students to study or conduct research abroad, as appropriate, and to seek external support in ways that will enhance their curriculum vitae as well as their scholarly and professional training.

Program advantages include the following:

- The opportunity to develop broad competencies in major religious traditions and the discipline of Religious Studies, while cultivating scholarly expertise in a particular area of specialization.
- Small classes that facilitate professor-student interaction, encouraging faculty mentoring while fostering community and collegiality with other graduate students.
- The opportunity to pursue interdisciplinary training and related interests by taking courses or working one-on-one with faculty in other University of Denver departments.
- Preparation either for doctoral work or for a professional career, with strong support from faculty and the University of Denver's career counselors.
- Opportunities to engage with and conduct research within metropolitan Denver, a culturally and religiously diverse city with a high quality of life.
- Substantial scholarship packages, including tuition credits and opportunities to serve as a research assistant.

What do applicants need in order to qualify for the Religious Studies MA program?

Applicants must have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college, with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. Applicants, as necessary, must meet the minimum performance standard set by the Office of Graduate Education for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Applicants must have an appropriate background in the study of the humanities. Undergraduate courses in Religious Studies are highly desirable, but all work in related areas will be taken into consideration.

In addition, successful applicants will have the following qualifications:

- Academic qualification for graduate-level study;
- Preparation to do coursework and conduct research that emphasizes engagement with local and global communities;
- Motivation to work collegially with faculty and other students in a community of learning.

What can graduates do with a MA in Religious Studies?

The MA degree in religious studies prepares students for PhD work or for teaching and careers in journalism, government, education, and nonprofit organizations in which cross-cultural analytical skills are important. The program provides broad competencies in several religious traditions, while offering students the opportunity to specialize in an area of particular interest.

Why pursue a Graduate Certificate in Religious Studies at the University of Denver?

The graduate certificate in Religious Studies provides students with an opportunity to acquire graduate-level exposure to the academic study of religion and to several of the world's major religious traditions. This certificate program provides students with the opportunity to do the following:

- Develop an introductory, graduate-level understanding of two major world religious traditions;
- Gain a grasp of pertinent theoretical approaches to the study of religion; and
- Engage major issues in a particular religious tradition or aspect of religion.

For students currently enrolled in graduate programs in fields other than religious studies or the study of religion - such as business, international studies, law or other CAHSS disciplines - this certificate will augment the competencies gained in their primary program. For students currently pursuing a career, particularly those in consulting, journalism, the law, the non-profit sector, public policy, education, human resources, faith-based institutions/organizations or other professions where a knowledge of religious beliefs, practices and values can be important, this certificate will enhance their professional credentials or expand their expertise into a new arena.

What do applicants need in order to qualify for the Religious Studies graduate certificate program?

Successful applicants will have the following qualifications:

- Academic qualification for graduate level study;
- Preparation to do coursework and conduct research that emphasizes engagement with local and global communities;
- Motivation to work with faculty and other students in a community of learning.

Why Pursue a Graduate Certificate in Religion and International Affairs at the University of Denver?

The Graduate Certificate in Religion and International Affairs provides students pursuing a master's degree in the Department of Religious Studies (CAHSS) or the Josef Korbel School of International Studies the opportunity to enhance their home program of study with specific expertise in the scholarly and professional field of religion and international affairs. This certificate program emphasizes scholarly and practitioner approaches to understanding the intersections between religion and international affairs in the modern world, providing students with an interdisciplinary approach to contemporary case studies as well as theoretical issues.

Why pursue a Specialized Graduate Certificate in World Religions at the University of Denver?

The World Religions Specialized Graduate Certificate offers students the opportunity to acquire graduate-level understanding of three of the world's major religious traditions, grounded in conceptual frameworks of how religion works in today's globalizing world. It aims to augment students' professional and scholarly knowledge with an understanding of the many ways that religion, politics, economics, culture, and society intersect - in the United States and around the world.

What do applicants need in order to qualify for a Specialized Graduate Certificate in World Religions?

Applicants must have an undergraduate degree from an accredited college, with a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0. Applicants, as necessary, must meet the minimum performance standard set by the Office of Graduate Education for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL). Undergraduate courses taken in Religious Studies are highly desirable, but all work in related areas will be taken into consideration. Background in the study of the humanities will be especially useful in Religious Studies courses.

In addition, successful applicants will have the following qualifications:

- Academic qualification for graduate level study;
- Preparation to do coursework and conduct research that emphasizes engagement with local and global communities;
- Motivation to work collegially with faculty and other students in a community of learning.

Joint PhD Program in the Study of Religion

A number of graduates of the Department of Religious Studies' MA program choose to continue their doctoral studies in the Joint PhD program.

The Joint PhD Program, which the University offers in partnership with the Iliff School of Theology, is taught by distinguished faculty from the University of Denver and Iliff. The faculty of the Department of Religious Studies anchor the Joint PhD program on the DU side. The program

enrolls students from across the nation and around the world. The facilities and libraries of both institutions are open to all Joint PhD students, offering considerable research and academic resources. Please note that admission to the Joint Doctoral Program is a separate process, distinct from admission to the Department's MA program. For more details, please visit the joint PhD website at [www.du.edu/ \(http://www.du.edu/duiliffjoint/\)](http://www.du.edu/duiliffjoint/).

Master of Arts in Religious Studies

Degree and GPA Requirements

- Bachelor's degree: All graduate applicants must hold an earned baccalaureate from a regionally accredited college or university or the recognized equivalent from an international institution.
- Grade point average: The minimum undergraduate GPA for admission consideration for graduate study at the University of Denver is a cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits (approximately two years of work) for the baccalaureate degree. An earned master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution supersedes the minimum standards for the baccalaureate. For applicants with graduate coursework but who have not earned a master's degree or higher, the GPA from the graduate work may be used to meet the requirement. The minimum GPA is a cumulative 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all graduate coursework undertaken.
- Program GPA requirement: The minimum undergraduate GPA for admission consideration for this program is a cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

Prerequisites

- Appropriate undergraduate background in relevant arts, humanities or social science disciplines. Generally, some prior coursework in the academic study of religion is expected.

Standardized Test Scores

- GRE scores are optional for admission to this program. Applications submitted without scores will receive full consideration. Every application undergoes a comprehensive evaluation, including a careful review of all application materials. If you choose to submit test scores, you may upload your Test Taker Score Report PDF, which is considered unofficial. Official scores must be received directly from the appropriate testing agency upon admissions to the University of Denver. The ETS institution code to submit GRE scores to the University of Denver is 4842.

English Language Proficiency Test Score Requirements

The minimum TOEFL/IELTS/C1 Advanced/Duolingo English Test score requirements for this degree program are:

- Minimum TOEFL Score (Internet-based test): 80
- Minimum IELTS Score: 6.5
- Minimum C1 Advanced Score: 176
- Minimum Duolingo English Test Score: 115

English Conditional Admission: No, this program does not offer English Conditional Admission.

Certificate in Religious Studies

Degree and GPA Requirements

- Bachelor's degree: All graduate applicants must hold an earned baccalaureate from a regionally accredited college or university or the recognized equivalent from an international institution.
- Grade point average: The minimum undergraduate GPA for admission consideration for graduate study at the University of Denver is a cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits (approximately two years of work) for the baccalaureate degree. An earned master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution supersedes the minimum standards for the baccalaureate. For applicants with graduate coursework but who have not earned a master's degree or higher, the GPA from the graduate work may be used to meet the requirement. The minimum GPA is a cumulative 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all graduate coursework undertaken.
- Program GPA requirement: The minimum undergraduate GPA for admission consideration for this program is a cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

Prerequisites:

- Generally, some prior coursework in the academic study of religion is expected.

English Language Proficiency Test Score Requirements

The minimum TOEFL/IELTS/C1 Advanced/Duolingo English Test score requirements for this degree program are:

- Minimum TOEFL Score (Internet-based test): 80
- Minimum IELTS Score: 6.5
- Minimum C1 Advanced Score: 176
- Minimum Duolingo English Test Score: 115

English Conditional Admission: No, this program does not offer English Conditional Admission.

Certificate of Specialization in Religion and International Affairs

Interested applicants enrolled and in good standing in the Religious Studies MA program or the Korbel School of International Studies MA programs must submit an application form in order to officially add the certificate to their student record.

Certificate in World Religions Degree and GPA Requirements

- Bachelor's degree: All graduate applicants must hold an earned baccalaureate from a regionally accredited college or university or the recognized equivalent from an international institution.
- Grade point average: The minimum undergraduate GPA for admission consideration for graduate study at the University of Denver is a cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale or a 2.5 on a 4.0 scale for the last 60 semester credits or 90 quarter credits (approximately two years of work) for the baccalaureate degree. An earned master's degree or higher from a regionally accredited institution supersedes the minimum standards for the baccalaureate. For applicants with graduate coursework but who have not earned a master's degree or higher, the GPA from the graduate work may be used to meet the requirement. The minimum GPA is a cumulative 3.0 on a 4.0 scale for all graduate coursework undertaken.
- Program GPA requirement: The minimum undergraduate GPA for admission consideration for this program is a cumulative 2.5 on a 4.0 scale.

English Language Proficiency Test Score Requirements

The minimum TOEFL/IELTS/C1 Advanced/Duolingo English Test score requirements for this degree program are:

- Minimum TOEFL Score (Internet-based test): 80
- Minimum IELTS Score: 6.5
- Minimum C1 Advanced Score: 176
- Minimum Duolingo English Test Score: 115

English Conditional Admission:

No, this program does not offer English Conditional Admission.

Master's Degree Program

Master of Arts in Religious Studies

Degree Requirements

Coursework Requirements

Code	Title	Credits
Course requirements:		
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods	4
Select three of the following (Two from the Abrahamic Traditions and one from the Asian Traditions)		12
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism	
RLGS 3820	Buddhism	
RLGS 3001 or RLGS 3102	Judaism Early Judaism	
RLGS 3203 or RLGS 3192	Christianity Christian Literature	
RLGS 3500 or RLGS 3503	Islam Quran and Hadith	

Areas of specialization

Select at least 16 hours in one of the following five areas of specialization: 16

Critical Theory

Critical Theory and Religion brings together a range of disciplines in social sciences and humanities, based on both the original discourses of "critical theory" as developed after WWII by the Frankfurt School, and the "new critical theory" in its interdisciplinary scope. This approach to religion will address topics such as class, race, gender, ethnicity, politics, globalization, and decolonialization. Students pursuing this specialization will choose their courses from a prescribed list of courses both inside and outside of the Religious Studies department. At least 8 of the 16 required credit hours for the specialization must have a RLGS prefix, though a cross-listed course may count. The following is a non-exhaustive sample of courses that meet the Critical Theory specialization criteria. Students will consult with the department's graduate advising team prior to each registration period to confirm whether their courses meet the Critical Theory criteria.

ANTH 3020	Native Religions
ANTH 3060	Cultural Narratives
ECON 3040	Marxian Political Economy
PHIL 3005	Cosmopolitics
PHIL 3075	Marxism
PHIL 3210	Philosophy of Movement
PHIL 3466	Contemporary Continental Philosophy
RLGS 3302	Islamic Fundamentalism
RLGS 3370	Freud, Psychology, & Religion
RLGS 3452	Political Theology
RLGS 3453	Is God a Racist Sexist?: Black Liberation and Womanist Theology
RLGS 3454	Capitalism, Religion, Democracy
RLGS 3460	Nietzsche & the Death of God
RLGS 3465	Derrida and Postmodernism
RLGS 3475	Deleuze and Semiotics
RLGS 3570	Religion and Morality in the American Public Square
RLGS 3645	Religious Nationalisms: A Comparative Approach to White Christian Nationalism and Hindu Nationalism
RLGS 3694	Religion in the Virtual Space: A Critical Theory Approach
RLGS 3707	Religion and Film
RLGS 3740	Bodies and Souls

Sacred Texts

The Sacred Texts specialization focuses on biblical texts/religious traditions such as the Hebrew Bible, Christian Testament, the Qur'an, etc. Within this specialization, students will choose either to direct their study to one religious text, requiring appropriate competency in the relevant language (s), or take a comparative approach. The language requirement for this specialization must be completed either prior to matriculation, or during the student's first year of study, and is equivalent to one full-year of language instruction. The University of Denver does not offer introductory, graduate-level instruction in biblical Hebrew, koine Greek, Qur'anic Arabic, Sanskrit, classical Chinese, or Tibetan. The student may not use language instruction credit to satisfy degree requirements. Any student looking to pursue this specialization must consult the department's graduate advising team to discuss options such as outside language programs. The following is a sample of coursework used to fulfill the required 16 credit hours for the Sacred Texts specialization.

RLGS 3150	The Bible & Dead Sea Scrolls
RLGS 3151	Dead Sea Scrolls
RLGS 3192	Christian Literature
RLGS 3503	Quran and Hadith
RLGS 3740	Bodies and Souls

Religion and International Studies

The specialization in religion and international studies focuses on the role of religion in the interplay of different religions and cultures within a global context. Particular attention may be given to certain regions such as the Americas, Asia, or the Middle East, depending on the interest or availability of faculty. Students must take at least one course in a specific religious tradition beyond the core requirements as well as one course in the theory of religion that pertains to international and multicultural studies. The remaining courses can be chosen from the department's approved list of courses for the area of specialization. Finally, students must take at least 4 hours of course work (including independent study, service learning, or field work) at a location outside the United States and Canada that meet the student's curricular and long-term professional goals. Depending on the student's program of study, the department may in certain instances require the passing of a competency exam in a language relevant to that program of study (e.g., if the focus is on the Middle East, the language would be Arabic; if on Latin America, Spanish).

RLGS 3302	Islamic Fundamentalism
RLGS 3350	Culture, Psyche, and Religion
RLGS 3452	Political Theology
RLGS 3454	Capitalism, Religion, Democracy

RLGS 3500	Islam
RLGS 3502	Contemporary Islam
RLGS 3503	Quran and Hadith
RLGS 3504	Islam and Gender
RLGS 3645	Religious Nationalisms: A Comparative Approach to White Christian Nationalism and Hindu Nationalism
RLGS 3707	Religion and Film
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism
RLGS 3832	Religious Lives: The Dalai Lamas
RLGS 3890	Religion and Diaspora
RLGS 3893	Buddhism and Social Justice
ANTH 3020	Native Religions
INTS 4011	Comparative Genocide
INTS 4525	Religion-State Relations in Comparative Perspectives
INTS 4517	Politics of Deeply Divided Societies
INTS 4526	Modern Islamic Political Thought
INTS 4649	Human Rights and the Middle East

Lived Religions

The Lived Religions area of specialization allows students to attend closely to the practice of religions, as well as to activities and ways of life that may have had their origins in religions but may now be detached from specific traditions (e.g., meditation, dietary practices). In addition to the core requirements, students must take at least four courses (within or outside the department) in the historical, social, and cultural forms and practices of the world's various religions, which can include new, indigenous, Latino/a, or African and African diasporic religions. Students pursuing a specialization in Lived Religions will meet with the department's advising team prior to registration to verify that their courses meet the Lived Religions criteria.

RLGS 3001	Judaism
RLGS 3102	Early Judaism
RLGS 3203	Christianity
RLGS 3205	Native Americans and Christianity in USA
RLGS 3300	Psychology of Religion
RLGS 3302	Islamic Fundamentalism
RLGS 3350	Culture, Psyche, and Religion
RLGS 3500	Islam
RLGS 3502	Contemporary Islam
RLGS 3570	Religion and Morality in the American Public Square
RLGS 3832	Religious Lives: The Dalai Lamas
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism
RLGS 3820	Buddhism
RLGS 3890	Religion and Diaspora

Philosophy of Religion

Students pursuing a specialization in Philosophy of Religion may take courses in both the Religious Studies and Philosophy departments. Students are required to select at least 8 credit hours of coursework in the theory of religion, and 4 credit hours from each of two major philosophical periods (8 credit hours total), which can focus on one specific philosopher or philosophers. The philosophical periods are Ancient to Modern (Plato to Kant) and Late Modern to Postmodern (Hegel to present). Students pursuing this specialization will meet with the department's graduate advising team to discuss course selection prior to the start of their first term. The following is a non-exhaustive sample of coursework taken to satisfy the requirements of the Philosophy of Religion specialization.

RLGS 3023	Great Thinkers: Maimonides
RLGS 3192	Christian Literature
RLGS 3370	Freud, Psychology, & Religion
RLGS 3452	Political Theology
RLGS 3460	Nietzsche & the Death of God
RLGS 3465	Derrida and Postmodernism
RLGS 3475	Deleuze and Semiotics

Elective Credits	13
Total Credits	45

Minimum number of credits required for the degree: 45

Students must declare an Area of Specialization by the time they reach 32 hours of coursework.

Non-Coursework Requirements

In order to complete the MA degree, students must choose one of the following completion options:

- **Journal Article Track:** The journal article option requires students to take a research paper they submitted as part of a Religious Studies course and expand it into a publishable journal article. Only a course with the prefix RLGS is eligible, unless the student has a compelling case for why a paper without that prefix should be used. Students selecting this option will research Religious Studies academic journals and will select an appropriate target journal with the approval of their advisor. They will shape their article in accordance with the aims and mission of the selected journal, and will format it in accordance with the journal's submission guidelines. The student will submit the final paper to their committee, and present the research as part of an oral presentation. Please note that the department does not require the student to publish the article, or to have it accepted for publication, in that journal. However, it must be the decision of the examining committee that the article meets the standards of the chosen journal.
- **Thesis Track:** The thesis option requires students to take a religious studies course paper including original research, on which the student received a minimum grade of A-, and revise and expand it into a graduate thesis of approximately 50-60 pages. The thesis may be expanded based on the number of bibliographic materials used as well as the scope of the topic itself. Students should not try to alter the general topic of the original paper in any major way. The thesis involves a substantive undertaking that allows the student to make an original contribution to the field of scholarly religious studies, as well as to demonstrate a mastery of the relevant theories and background literature. It should involve serious engagement with primary sources, as well as sources in the student's research language, if appropriate. In order to be eligible to write a thesis, a student must agree on a topic as well as a tentative thesis title with the project's first reader *no later than* the end of the quarter in which the student will have completed 24 hours of credit toward the degree. Normally, that means the end of the spring quarter during the academic year when the student entered the program. In addition, students must have completed all their core requirements for the degree by that time.
- **Comprehensive Exam Track:** The comprehensive exam option is recommended for students for whom the MA is a terminal degree. It is also recommended for those who plan to teach at the secondary school or community college level, or who might otherwise benefit from the certification of competency in the general field of Religious Studies. Students choosing this option will take ONE exam in the Theory of Religion; ONE in Judaism, Christianity, OR Islam; and ONE in Buddhism OR Hinduism. The department will provide the set reading lists for each exam – approximately 10-12 texts each. The department expects the students to read, analyze, and reflect upon each text and its contribution to each field, as part of their preparation to demonstrate competency in the three fields. Students planning to take comprehensive exams should meet for a final check-in with their advisor and examiners during the fourth week of the quarter before the one in which they intend to graduate. Students will normally take their exams during the fourth or fifth week of the quarter in which they intend to graduate. The student must opt no later than the last week of the quarter before taking exams whether they want to take three, 3-hour examinations in a proctored setting or three 72-hour take home-exams over a period of two weeks. In both exam formats, students may consult texts and/or notes. Take-home exams will require substantially more writing than proctored exams.
- **Project Track:** Students pursuing the project option will develop a project that will allow them to make an original contribution to the field of applied religious studies. It may take several forms but should include a substantive written component and a formal presentation.

Please note that all completion option defenses and presentations may only be scheduled during the regular academic year: Fall, winter or spring quarters.

The Department of Religious Studies allows graduate students to transfer up to 10 hours of previous graduate course work from another institution or another department at the University during the first quarter of the student's admission to the program. The transfer must be approved by the department as well as by the Office of Graduate Education. Similarly, the Department allows students to earn waivers for the traditions requirements by submitting syllabi from similar courses taken at the undergraduate level.

Students may also take up to 15 hours in independent study, including independent studies with course numbers outside of the department.

Graduate Certificate Program

Certificate in Religious Studies

The Graduate Certificate program allows students structured flexibility, providing exposure to religious traditions through the traditions requirement, training in the discipline of religious studies with the theory requirement, and the opportunity to pursue particular interests through elective courses. The certificate requires a minimum of 24 credit hours.

Program Requirements**Coursework Requirements**

Code	Title	Credits
Traditions		
Select two of the following:		8
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism	
RLGS 3820	Buddhism	
RLGS 3001	Judaism	
or RLGS 3102	Early Judaism	
RLGS 3203	Christianity	
or RLGS 3192	Christian Literature	
RLGS 3500	Islam	
or RLGS 3503	Quran and Hadith	
Theory		
Select one of the following:		4
RLGS 3300	Psychology of Religion	
RLGS 3452	Political Theology	
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods	
Electives		
Students choose three courses from RLGS 3000-level courses		12
Total Credits		24

Minimum number of credits required for the degree: 24

Certificate of Specialization Program

Certificate of Specialization in Religion and International Affairs

This certificate program provides students pursuing an MA degree in the Department of Religious Studies (CAHSS) or the Joseph Korbel School of International Studies the opportunity to enhance their "home program" with coursework that emphasizes scholarly and practitioner approaches to understanding the intersections between religion and international affairs in the modern world.

This certificate requires a minimum of 24 credit hours.

Code	Title	Credits
Core courses		8
INTS 4525	Religion-State Relations in Comparative Perspectives	
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods	
Elective courses ¹		16
Choose from the following:		
INTS 4517	Politics of Deeply Divided Societies	4
INTS 4526	Modern Islamic Political Thought	4
INTS 4534	Topics in Middle East Politics	4
INTS 4649	Human Rights and the Middle East	4
RLGS 3302	Islamic Fundamentalism	4
RLGS 3452	Political Theology	4
RLGS 3454	Capitalism, Religion, Democracy	4
RLGS 3503	Quran and Hadith	4
RLGS 3504	Islam and Gender	4
RLGS 3645	Religious Nationalisms: A Comparative Approach to White Christian Nationalism and Hindu Nationalism	4
RLGS 3693	Religion and the Media	4
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism	4
RLGS 3890	Religion and Diaspora	4
RLGS 3893	Buddhism and Social Justice	4
Total Credits		24

¹ Other elective courses may be approved with permission from the director.

Specialized Certificate Program

Specialized Certificate in Religious Studies with a Concentration in World Religions

Minimum Credits Required for Certificate: 16

Code	Title	Credits
Required Course		4
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods	
Select 1-2 courses from the Western/Abrahamic traditions:		4-8
RLGS 3001 or RLGS 3102	Judaism Early Judaism	
RLGS 3203 or RLGS 3192	Christianity Christian Literature	4
RLGS 3500 or RLGS 3503	Islam Quran and Hadith	
Select 1-2 courses from the Eastern traditions:		4-8
RLGS 3820	Buddhism	
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism	
Total Credits		16

RLGS 3001 Judaism (4 Credits)

A literary and historical journey through Judaism. This course examines the "Jewish story" from its roots to its modern-day manifestations, focusing on select, classic Jewish texts in their historical contexts. From them, students explore Jewish tradition and practice and actively engage with and in the vivid interpretive imagination of the authors of Judaism throughout the ages. Cross listed with JUST 3001.

RLGS 3002 Creation & Humanity (4 Credits)

Why am I here and what is my place in the world? In this class, students engage a wide-variety of answers to this timeless question. We focus on primary texts regarding the creation of the world and humanity's role within the world from multiple religious traditions, from ancient Near Eastern mythologies to modern spiritualities and film. Themes of the course include humanity's relation to the divine, nature, and one another; we also discuss issues of inequality and sustainability. Students also learn to perform fruitful cross-cultural comparison.

RLGS 3003 The Moses Traditions: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Traditions about Moses from Past to Present (4 Credits)

The "Abrahamic Traditions" (Judaism, Christianity & Islam) are described as such because each tradition situates its origin in the figure of Abraham, yet there is another foundational figure who looms even larger in all three traditions – Moses. The Moses Traditions traces Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions about Moses from the Hebrew Bible through modern America, and in so doing brings into the foreground the religious and inter-religious importance of this beloved figure. Drawing from over 2,500 years of texts and traditions, students come away with a deeper understanding of: 1) how the figure of Moses is shaped and reshaped throughout history and across the globe, 2) how religious traditions portray and redescribe foundational figures to suit the ever-changing needs of their communities, and 3) how to engage a multi-faceted, culturally-embedded, and millennia-long collection of traditions in a way that yields fruitful insight into the inner workings of the religious imagination. This course is cross-listed with JUST 3003.

RLGS 3023 Great Thinkers: Maimonides (4 Credits)

Using "The Guide for the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the central figures in medieval philosophy and Jewish thought. Our study includes analyses of his ideas on principles of faith, human perfection, intellectual vs. "imaginational" approaches to truth, pedagogy and politics, reasons for the commandments, the nature of God and divine will, the limits of human knowledge, the mechanics of prophecy, and the parameters and implications of providence. Cross listed with PHIL 3023 and JUST 3023. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

RLGS 3024 Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters (4 Credits)

Using "The Guide of the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), a central figure in the history of philosophy and in the history of Jewish thought. In this course, we examine in depth the relationship between Maimonides' core ideas and various Greek, Muslim and Christian thinkers, including: Aristotle, Plotinus, al-Farabi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), al-Ghazali, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and Aquinas. Topics to be explored include: what is "metaphysics?"; God's unity and essence as existence itself; the mystery of knowing and not knowing God (including a consideration of God's ways as well as "negative theology"—viz. the extent to which we do not know God); God as pure intellect; the nature of the cosmos and the "separate intellects"; creation vs. eternity vs. emanation: philosophical and religious perspectives on the origins of the universe and implications for "living in the world with/out God." In our study, we will also address the methodological implications of cross-religious and cross-language analyses, and how to spot and address (in your own work and in the work of others) tacit cultural biases at play in the interpretive process. Cross listed with JUST 3024 and PHIL 3024. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission.

RLGS 3086 The Emergence of Monotheism (4 Credits)

This course is cross-listed with JUST 3086. Monotheism, the belief in a singular deity, did not arise out of nothing. Rather, the emergence of monotheism was a multi-stage process spanning several millennia and involving numerous religious traditions, primarily Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This process was marked by internal and external conflict, as individuals and communities struggled to distinguish themselves from their non-monotheistic predecessors and neighbors, while often attempting to convince others to do the same. In this class, we begin with the ancient Near Eastern religious environment in which the idea of monotheism first appeared, then turn our attention to how the movement toward monotheism shapes the texts of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Quran. We also look to archaeological sites and case studies in material culture to fill out our understanding of the lived experiences at play in the emergence of monotheism.

RLGS 3090 God and Giving? Religion and Philanthropy in America (4 Credits)

This course is cross-listed with JUST 3090 and ANTH 3090. The United States is notable for its high levels of religious participation and for its well-established and rapidly expanding nonprofit sector. In this course, we will explore these phenomena from a variety of disciplinary perspectives including anthropology, history, and religious studies in order to understand the intersections of religion and philanthropy. By looking at religious ideologies, social theory, and legal and economic contexts, we will consider how religion, government, and philanthropy shape and are shaped by one another. We will examine a number of case studies including faith responses to Hurricane Katrina, the history of philanthropy in Denver, and U.S.-based religious global giving. We will explore key questions regarding community and social responsibility and ask which actors get to define key societal problems and who is ultimately responsible for responding to these problems.

RLGS 3102 Early Judaism (4 Credits)

This course traces the development of Judaism in history and literature from the Babylonian Exile and the end of the biblical period through the origins of Rabbinic Judaism and the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (c. 650 CE). However, special emphasis is placed on Jewish culture in the late Second Temple period (c. 200 BCE to 100 CE) and its impact on the early Christian movement, including Jewish literature from the time of Jesus, lost texts of the Bible, new evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the few surviving historical sources of the Second Temple Period. In addition, students analyze how the Bible came to be and understand how sacred texts and their interpretations eventually became the new center of both Judaism and Christianity. Cross listed with JUST 3102.

RLGS 3150 The Bible & Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)

This course includes an advanced study of the Dead Sea Scrolls with a particular focus on the Bible as it appears in the Qumran library. We will discuss the variant versions of the Bible, some of which were previously unknown before the discovery of the Scrolls, and how the findings of the Scrolls may question the very idea of "Bible" itself in the context of the late Second Temple Judaism. Further, we will place particular emphasis on studying the way biblical texts were engaged, interpreted and even written by the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this way, we shall explore the origins of biblical interpretation and how the notion of the Bible came to be. Cross listed with JUST 3150. Prerequisites: None. The Scrolls will be read in English translation, but those with Hebrew reading skills will have an opportunity to read/translate portions of the Scrolls in community.

RLGS 3151 Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)

The Dead Sea Scrolls represent one of the greatest manuscript finds of the twentieth century and have been said to be the most important discovery in biblical archaeology. These scrolls offer a rare window into early Judaism and Christianity and offer us the earliest and most important witnesses to the (Hebrew) Bible. This course covers the Dead Sea Scrolls in their historical, literary and religious context in English translation, together with relevant scholarly research. Cross listed with JUST 3151.

RLGS 3192 Christian Literature (4 Credits)

Reading and discussion of influential historic books pertaining to Christianity. This course will focus on a selection of primary texts either from a specific period of Christianity (such as early Christianity or medieval Christianity) or on a specific topic within the study of Christianity (such as monasticism or mysticism).

RLGS 3203 Christianity (4 Credits)

This is an introductory course about the Christian religion, with a substantial component devoted to experiential learning. The primary goal of the course is to acquaint students with the richness, dynamism and diversity of one of the world's largest and most influential religious traditions. Even those students who have some general knowledge of Christianity benefit from the disciplined approach of the academic study of religion.

RLGS 3205 Native Americans and Christianity in USA (4 Credits)

This class will help students explore the forms of Christianity that have emerged among the indigenous peoples of North America. In their struggles against and adaptation to Euro-American cultural forms, indigenous peoples have developed "contextualized" forms of Christian religiosity. Students will develop a careful understanding of the multiplicity and historical contingency of Christianity as it has spread throughout the world.

RLGS 3300 Psychology of Religion (4 Credits)

Beliefs, feelings and actions representing human religious response of experience; function of religion in individual life.

RLGS 3302 Islamic Fundamentalism (4 Credits)

This writing-intensive course introduces students to the history and scope of fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world, focusing on the Middle East. Beginning with a look at the internal traditions of renewal and reform built around the idea of a return to the fundament or origins of Islam, the course examines the rise of major movements from the 1700s to the present. Students will engage with key questions, including the following: What distinguishes fundamentalism from radicalism? How do Sunni and Shii fundamentalisms differ? What roles have these movements played in politics and society, and how might these evolve in the future? How might policy makers and others best approach fundamentalist groups? A basic knowledge of Islam is assumed; students wishing to enroll without this background knowledge will be provided supplementary readings.

RLGS 3315 Religion & Moral Psychology (4 Credits)

Philosophical foundations and research strategies of psychological studies of moral thought; Aristotelian, Kantian and utilitarian thought included, as well as religious dimensions of morality.

RLGS 3350 Culture, Psyche, and Religion (4 Credits)**RLGS 3370 Freud, Psychology, & Religion (4 Credits)**

Readings, discussion, and papers help students learn about the life, intellectual and social environment, and clinical and theoretical work of Sigmund Freud. Attention is given to the influence of Freud's work on the understanding of religion at the beginning of the 21st century.

RLGS 3448 Theory of the Subject: From Hegel to Žižek (4 Credits)

The great French philosopher Michel Foucault in his Collège de France lectures in the early 1980s characterized the theory of the subject as the very key to the development both of Western philosophy and Western thinking in general. This course will explore Foucault's thesis with reference to different theoretical models of subjectivity and "subjectification" (as Jacques Lacan calls it). It will do so through close readings of selections from the works of G.W.F. Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard, Lacan, Alain Badiou, and Slavoj Žižek as well as select portions of Foucault's 1981-82 lectures entitled *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*. This course is cross-listed with PHIL 3448.

RLGS 3452 Political Theology (4 Credits)

A general inquiry, focusing on the modern and postmodern eras, into various forms of philosophical reflection on the relationship between religion and political theory. Survey of the seminal ideas of such major thinkers as Kant, Hegel, Schmidt, Strauss, Derrida, Agamben, Asad, and Žižek.

RLGS 3453 Is God a Racist Sexist?: Black Liberation and Womanist Theology (4 Credits)

What is God's race? Does God have a gender? Is God on the side of the oppressed? Black liberation and Womanist theologies have asked these questions based on experience of black oppression in the context of the United States. African Americans have compelled to make sense of God in light of chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement. This questioning continues in light of today's social environment. This seminar course will discuss the many strands of liberation theology in the United States, including Womanist theology. In addition to black liberation theology's methodologies and its challenges to the theological discipline, we will explore the origins and development of theological discourse in the late 1960s during the later part of the Civil Rights Movement and the emergence of the Black Power Movement. Black Theology is a theological perspective which draws on the diverse sources, including religious experience, art, literature, music, and lived narratives. These sources will inform our study. Students will engage critical voices that have shaped the movement such as James Cone, but also engage critiques of Cone and Black Theology. The course will also explore how liberation theologies attempt to deal with the problems of race, class, and gender. Student will be introduced to theological construction in African American communities and analyze the similarities and differences between these theological constructions.

RLGS 3454 Capitalism, Religion, Democracy (4 Credits)

The course explores the historical and contemporary relationship between capitalism, religion, and democracy at a theoretical level. Focus will be on the question of what exactly is capitalism as understood by key political philosophers and social theorists in relationship to the religious world views and values that authorize it. At the same time, the course will examine in what measure these world views and values also promote liberal democracy, or work against it, while offering a genealogical account of such phenomena as slavery, colonialism, gender and class domination, along with present day iterations of ethno-nationalism and neoliberal hegemony.

RLGS 3456 Kant on Religion (4 Credits)

A study of the philosopher Immanuel Kant's major writings on religion and their subsequent influence on critical theory and the philosophy of religion.

RLGS 3460 Nietzsche & the Death of God (4 Credits)

This course will involve an intensive reading and discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'Thus Spake Zarathustra,' together with relevant associated materials, especially 'The Gay Science.' Cross listed with PHIL 3460.

RLGS 3465 Derrida and Postmodernism (4 Credits)

Cross listed with PHIL 3465.

RLGS 3470 Mysticism & Psychedelics (4 Credits)

The course will examine various texts, traditions, and practice from indigenous to New Age religions that fall under the general category of what has been historically labelled "mysticism." Special emphasis will be placed on chemical or plant-induced forms of altered consciousness, commonly known as "psychedelics" or "entheogens". that both simulate, and are frequently employed by different peoples in different times and places in tandem with, mystical experiences. The course will also examine the transcultural as well as the syncretic nature of mystical practices, spiritual disciplines, and the use of mind-altering substances, in particular with reference to the misuse of these forms by secular enthusiasts who are responsible for what is known as "cultural appropriation" or "neocolonial" misrepresentation.

RLGS 3475 Deleuze and Semiotics (4 Credits)

Examines the development of the thought of the famous French postmodern thinker Gilles Deleuze with special attention to his cultural and semiotic theory to the degree that it is relevant to the philosophy of religion. The course also investigates how Deleuze's work has shaped, and is beginning to push in new directions, contemporary postmodern philosophy. Prerequisites: must be at least junior standing and have completed at least two undergraduate courses in philosophy.

RLGS 3500 Islam (4 Credits)

Introduction to the history, faith, practice, culture(s), and politics of Islam, starting with the Judeo-Christian Near Eastern context in which it emerged and tracing its theological development and geographic spread around the world. Proceeding thematically along a broad historical frame, the course ends with an examination of the numerous, often competing, trends in contemporary Muslim communities.

RLGS 3502 Contemporary Islam (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to contemporary Islam. After a historical overview, the course looks thematically at different spheres of Muslim life. It considers changes that relate to political systems and forms of governance, styles of education, labor and professional work, changes in daily life habits such as timing and organization, changes in gender relations, and changes in religious authority. It also pays attention to the ways in which faith and practice are articulated through cultural practices like pop music and film.

RLGS 3503 Quran and Hadith (4 Credits)

This writing-intensive course introduces students to the key texts of Islam--the Qur'an and hadith--including their origins and meaning as well as how they have been interpreted by Muslims over time, and focusing as well on case studies that highlight issues of crucial relevance for today and the future.

RLGS 3504 Islam and Gender (4 Credits)

This upper-level course introduces students to key debates, historical developments, and thematic issues in the study of Islam and gender. It grounds this study in theoretical texts but takes a lived religions approach, focusing primarily on the production of "modern" gender norms in the colonial and post-colonial era. It proceeds thematically, with class sessions on sexualities, dress, reproduction, family roles, masculinities, pious self-construction, and the gendering of pilgrimage, and concludes with a look at contemporary and likely future debates.

RLGS 3505 Gender and Politics in Muslim Pop Cultures (4 Credits)

This undergraduate/graduate course introduces students to contemporary Muslim popular cultures, in the United States and around the world. It uses gender and politics as thematic lenses, taking a lived religions approach to phenomena that range from pious television programming to online efforts to spread Islamophobia.

RLGS 3570 Religion and Morality in the American Public Square (4 Credits)

Close focus on one or two moral issues in which religion is drawn into public debate in the contemporary U.S. Observation of the debate first hand at demonstrations, town meetings, and discussion groups, etc. Analysis of these observations is facilitated by readings on the subject and class discussion.

RLGS 3642 Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and Civil Rights (4 Credits)

In this course, students will explore the lives and religious thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, two of the most prominent black religious leaders during the height of the US Civil Rights Movement, often perceived as ideological opposites. Through engaging with their autobiographies, speeches, students will compare and contrast their thoughts on religion, race, and politics in the United States. During the course, students will be able to identify religious and political similarities and differences between the two leaders. We will also explore the development of their religious and ideological shifts in the context of the struggle for civil rights. Ultimately, we explore how their vision for racial justice developed into a call for social and economic equality and human rights.

RLGS 3645 Religious Nationalisms: A Comparative Approach to White Christian Nationalism and Hindu Nationalism (4 Credits)

This course examines the religious nationalism in the context of South Asia and the US. We investigate the religion, identity, politics, and power with readings/materials that explore historical memory, religious symbols/rituals/canon, political upheavals, and violent actions in both of these regions. In the context of South Asia, we will examine the British colonial period and post-independence India. In the US, we will focus our attention on post-Civil War politics and the development of the modern US polity. We necessarily interrogate the history and dynamism of important terms such as "religion", "nationalism", and "secular" in the context of Hindu Nationalism and white Christian Nationalism in South Asia and the US respectively. At the core of our inquiry is how specific religious traditions have been invoked in political contexts (and vice-versa), public displays of religiosity, and the complex dynamics of religion and the state.

RLGS 3693 Religion and the Media (4 Credits)

Interactions between religion and all forms of communications media in American life.

RLGS 3694 Religion in the Virtual Space: A Critical Theory Approach (4 Credits)

This course uses a critical theory lens to consider religious praxis, traditions, beliefs, canons, and rituals within virtual/digital spaces (e.g. websites, apps, social media, digital platforms for gaming, etc.). Students will be introduced to several scholars of virtual religious spaces and practices who use both netnography techniques and critical theory approaches (e.g. Wendy Chun, Lisa Nakamura, Michelle Zappavigna, Oliver Roy, etc.) as well classical scholars of semiotics and language (Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Walter Benjamin, Julia Kristeva, and others). Theoretical works are paired with ethnographic, historical and/or public scholarship/experiential to offer students a "lived perspective" critical approach to the topic of digital or virtual religion.

RLGS 3695 Digital Religion (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the study of digital religion from a lived religions perspective. It begins with an examination of the history, concepts and methods of the field, and continues with thematic explorations of digital religion scholarship across varied religious traditions. Students develop an understanding of how scholars study religion and spiritual identities, beliefs, and practices online, and how the religious and digital arenas influence and shape one another.

RLGS 3701 Topics in Religious Studies (1-4 Credits)

An exploration of various topics and issues related to the academic study of religion. The subject matter of the course varies and may be taught by the regular faculty of the department or a visiting scholar. Some offerings may include a travel component.

RLGS 3707 Religion and Film (4 Credits)

Understanding religion requires us to take culture seriously. In doing so, we must consider products of culture, including popular culture. This course engages both classic and more recent films as “texts” to be analyzed, not as mere entertainments or diversions. We focus not only on those films that identify themselves explicitly as “religious” or reflect a particular religious tradition, but also moved that render the subject more obliquely, which reveal – via image and sound – religion as a complex human activity.

RLGS 3708 First Americans in Film: Religion, Land, and Identity (4 Credits)

This course will explore, using a chronological approach, the history of Indigenous portrayal in the US Western Cinematic tradition. Students will be exposed to a variety of interweaving historical processes; including colonial history (with particular interest in Indigenous experience), the history of the film industry, the history of Indigenous representation in film, and the history of the 20 Century United States (with particular interest in Indigenous experience). The first two weeks of the course will be dedicated to the development of a theoretical toolbox. This toolbox – consisting of a series of theoretical concepts and analytical approaches – will function as the bedrock of the class and empower students, supplying the necessary lenses through which to analyze the films that will be screened throughout the quarter.

RLGS 3732 Feminist and Queer Theory in Religion (4 Credits)

This course explores the intersection of feminist and queer theories with religious studies. Beginning with feminist theory, we will trace the beginning of the feminist movement and consider the ways in which religion participated in and also resisted feminism. Moving into queer theory, we will critically examine gender and sexuality and center these topics in the field of religious studies. During the course, students will reinterpret religious texts through the use of feminist and queer theory, providing a challenging critique, an imaginative reframing, or even a queering of a sacred text.

RLGS 3740 Bodies and Souls (4 Credits)

This course examines the unique place of the body in biblical religion. We ask how the Bible and its interpreters have shaped current views on sex and the gendered body in Western society. How has the Bible been (mis)used in relation to current understandings of the physical body? Is the saying that a “human” does not have a body, but is a body as true for the Hebrew Bible as the Christian New Testament? How have Judaism and Christianity (de)valued sexuality, procreation, and celibacy? How do the biblical traditions shape our modern opinions about the ideal physical body and body modifications? How can we understand “out-of-body” experiences and notions of death and afterlife in Western religion? Students are encouraged to interpret the Bible and their own beliefs from a uniquely embodied perspective. Cross listed with GWST 3740, JUST 3740.

RLGS 3760 Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods (4 Credits)

This course explores how religious movements around the world both affect, and are affected by, the process of globalization. A major segment of the course is devoted to various theories of globalization and how they account for the increasingly important role of religion. Focus is largely on the relationship between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

RLGS 3814 Modern Hinduism (4 Credits)

Doctrines, practices and history of South Asian Hinduism; conceptions of Gods and gods; image worship and temples; and the influences of caste and gender on the experience of Hinduism.

RLGS 3820 Buddhism (4 Credits)

Buddhist life and thought from origins to present in India, Tibet, Japan and China.

RLGS 3832 Religious Lives: The Dalai Lamas (4 Credits)

This course explores the many lives of the Dalai Lamas and the transformation of a reincarnated religious teacher into the political leader of Tibet and, eventually, a worldwide religious personality. In order to understand that transformation, the course investigates the institution of the Dalai Lamas from historical, doctrinal, and ritual perspectives. We will look at the role of the Dalai Lama as an embodiment of the bodhisattva of compassion at the center of a tapestry of religious ceremony and ritual performances. The course will also consider the religious, ethical, and political thought of several of the most prominent Dalai Lamas, with significant attention given to the writings and work of the current, fourteenth, Dalai Lama.

RLGS 3885 Islamic Mysticism (4 Credits)

The origins and development of Islamic mysticism, including asceticism and the Sufi orders.

RLGS 3890 Religion and Diaspora (4 Credits)

When forced to leave a homeland, displaced communities frequently turn to religion to maintain identity and adapt to—or resist—new surrounding culture(s). This course examines the role of religion and identity in three Jewish and Christian communities living in diaspora and poses questions such as the following: What is the relationship between religion and (home)land? How have the biblical themes of exodus, diaspora, promise and restoration been applied to contemporary experiences? And how have our American stories been interpreted through the lens of the Bible? As part of the service learning component, students have the opportunity to work with religious and immigrant aid organizations in the Denver community. Cross listed with JUST 3890.

RLGS 3891 Justice: A Biblical Perspective (4 Credits)

This is a service learning course designed for religious studies undergraduate majors, though non-majors are welcome to enroll. Cross listed with JUST 3891.

RLGS 3892 Grant Writing for Community Engagement and Research (4 Credits)

This community engagement course introduces student to non-profit work and to scholarship on non-profit activities. It connects students with community partners, continuing the department's commitment to experiential learning and to engagement with living faith communities. Students spend course time discussing scholarship on grant writing and non-profit grant support and discussing logistical and other issues related to their community engagement partners. This course is intended to help provide advanced undergraduate and graduate students with arenas for future research, including possible thesis topics, while also offering a practical opportunity for professional development. Understanding 501(c)3 corporations and experience in writing grant proposals will be an asset for students planning to work in non-profits as well as for those continuing on to doctoral work.

RLGS 3893 Buddhism and Social Justice (4 Credits)

This course examines Buddhist theories and practices of social justice, with a focus on the contemporary global movements known as "Humanistic Buddhism" and "Socially Engaged Buddhism." The course covers topics such as: the roots of engaged Buddhism in social and political movements of 19th and 20-century Asia, the role of meditation and other Buddhist practices as both a support for and a means of social engagement, and Buddhist approaches to contemporary issues of racial justice, equality, economic development, and the environment. In the final analysis, the course asks whether the concept of justice makes sense within a Buddhist worldview, or if Buddhist concerns for social welfare hinge on an entirely different paradigm. This course is a community-engaged service learning course. As part of the course, students work with a local community partner to further their own community engagement work.

RLGS 3898 Dharamsala: Myth, Land, and Traditions (4 Credits)

This course explores the myths and stories that root cultural, religious, social and political traditions in the material landscape of India. It will explore the sacred spaces, images, rituals, and belief-traditions of the Himalayan region surrounding Dharamsala, India. As a study-abroad course, the materials, site visits, and community-engaged learning projects interrogate how myths operate as both cultural "glue" and demarcations of difference. Students participate in community-engaged learning placements to learn how myth creates and fosters cultural communities. Through site visits and readings we will learn how the "lived experience" of cultural belief-traditions, social and political practices, and sacred images and spaces are products of a unique marriage of land, story, and community. We will also have lectures and a Canvas site with pre-travel readings that will prepare you for the cultural and social belief-traditions we will encounter within Dharamsala. While in India, we will continue to read about ritual, devotion, stories of the land, social and political identities rooted in the land, and more. This course will be cross-listed with INTS for undergraduate and graduate elective credit.

RLGS 3991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)**RLGS 3995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)****RLGS 4050 History of Islam (4 Credits)****RLGS 4100 Hebrew Bible Backgrounds: Seminar in Ancient Israelite Religion (4 Credits)**

This course is designed to train the student in the method and means of engaging in archeo-historical study of the Hebrew Bible. The content of this course focuses on ancient Israelite religion in Iron Age Palestine, particularly on emergent ideas about God ('El) and the development and evolution of the priesthood. Cross listed with JUST 4100.

RLGS 4150 Biblical Aramaic (4 Credits)

Reading seminar in Biblical Aramaic. This course focuses on the vocabulary, syntax and expression of Aramaic in the Bible as well as in some related post-biblical texts (Targums, Dead Sea Scrolls, etc.).

RLGS 4980 Internship (1-4 Credits)

Designed to provide masters students with valuable experience in non-profit, educational, faith-based, governmental, and related organizations. It helps students translate the knowledge and analytical skills learned in Religious Studies courses into a professional context, while exploring potential career paths and professional opportunities. Students interested in pursuing an internship must meet with the Undergraduate Advisor at the start of the previous quarter to discuss internship goals and identify potential placements. Students meet weekly with a faculty supervisor to monitor their internship experience, and complete the internship by writing a reflective essay. For MA students only.

RLGS 4981 Internship in Religious Community (1-4 Credits)**RLGS 4991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)****RLGS 4995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)****Courses****RLGS 3001 Judaism (4 Credits)**

A literary and historical journey through Judaism. This course examines the "Jewish story" from its roots to its modern-day manifestations, focusing on select, classic Jewish texts in their historical contexts. From them, students explore Jewish tradition and practice and actively engage with and in the vivid interpretive imagination of the authors of Judaism throughout the ages. Cross listed with JUST 3001.

RLGS 3002 Creation & Humanity (4 Credits)

Why am I here and what is my place in the world? In this class, students engage a wide-variety of answers to this timeless question. We focus on primary texts regarding the creation of the world and humanity's role within the world from multiple religious traditions, from ancient Near Eastern mythologies to modern spiritualities and film. Themes of the course include humanity's relation to the divine, nature, and one another; we also discuss issues of inequality and sustainability. Students also learn to perform fruitful cross-cultural comparison.

RLGS 3003 The Moses Traditions: Jewish, Christian, and Muslim Traditions about Moses from Past to Present (4 Credits)

The "Abrahamic Traditions" (Judaism, Christianity & Islam) are described as such because each tradition situates its origin in the figure of Abraham, yet there is another foundational figure who looms even larger in all three traditions – Moses. The Moses Traditions traces Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions about Moses from the Hebrew Bible through modern America, and in so doing brings into the foreground the religious and inter-religious importance of this beloved figure. Drawing from over 2,500 years of texts and traditions, students come away with a deeper understanding of: 1) how the figure of Moses is shaped and reshaped throughout history and across the globe, 2) how religious traditions portray and redescribe foundational figures to suit the ever-changing needs of their communities, and 3) how to engage a multi-faceted, culturally-embedded, and millennia-long collection of traditions in a way that yields fruitful insight into the inner workings of the religious imagination. This course is cross-listed with JUST 3003.

RLGS 3023 Great Thinkers: Maimonides (4 Credits)

Using "The Guide for the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), one of the central figures in medieval philosophy and Jewish thought. Our study includes analyses of his ideas on principles of faith, human perfection, intellectual vs. "imaginational" approaches to truth, pedagogy and politics, reasons for the commandments, the nature of God and divine will, the limits of human knowledge, the mechanics of prophecy, and the parameters and implications of providence. Cross listed with PHIL 3023 and JUST 3023. Prerequisite: junior standing or instructor's permission.

RLGS 3024 Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters (4 Credits)

Using the "Guide of the Perplexed" as our central text, we explore the complex philosophical ideas of Moses Maimonides (1135-1204), a central figure in the history of philosophy and in the history of Jewish thought. In this course, we examine in depth the relationship between Maimonides' core ideas and various Greek, Muslim and Christian thinkers, including: Aristotle, Plotinus, al-Farabi, Avicenna (Ibn Sina), al-Ghazali, Averroes (Ibn Rushd), and Aquinas. Topics to be explored include: what is "metaphysics?"; God's unity and essence as existence itself; the mystery of knowing and not knowing God (including a consideration of God's ways as well as "negative theology"—viz. the extent to which we do not know God); God as pure intellect; the nature of the cosmos and the "separate intellects"; creation vs. eternity vs. emanation: philosophical and religious perspectives on the origins of the universe and implications for "living in the world with/out God." In our study, we will also address the methodological implications of cross-religious and cross-language analyses, and how to spot and address (in your own work and in the work of others) tacit cultural biases at play in the interpretive process. Cross listed with JUST 3024 and PHIL 3024. Prerequisite: Junior standing or instructor's permission.

RLGS 3086 The Emergence of Monotheism (4 Credits)

This course is cross-listed with JUST 3086. Monotheism, the belief in a singular deity, did not arise out of nothing. Rather, the emergence of monotheism was a multi-stage process spanning several millennia and involving numerous religious traditions, primarily Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This process was marked by internal and external conflict, as individuals and communities struggled to distinguish themselves from their non-monotheistic predecessors and neighbors, while often attempting to convince others to do the same. In this class, we begin with the ancient Near Eastern religious environment in which the idea of monotheism first appeared, then turn our attention to how the movement toward monotheism shapes the texts of the Hebrew Bible, New Testament, and Quran. We also look to archaeological sites and case studies in material culture to fill out our understanding of the lived experiences at play in the emergence of monotheism.

RLGS 3090 God and Giving? Religion and Philanthropy in America (4 Credits)

This course is cross-listed with JUST 3090 and ANTH 3090. The United States is notable for its high levels of religious participation and for its well-established and rapidly expanding nonprofit sector. In this course, we will explore these phenomena from a variety of disciplinary perspectives including anthropology, history, and religious studies in order to understand the intersections of religion and philanthropy. By looking at religious ideologies, social theory, and legal and economic contexts, we will consider how religion, government, and philanthropy shape and are shaped by one another. We will examine a number of case studies including faith responses to Hurricane Katrina, the history of philanthropy in Denver, and U.S.-based religious global giving. We will explore key questions regarding community and social responsibility and ask which actors get to define key societal problems and who is ultimately responsible for responding to these problems.

RLGS 3102 Early Judaism (4 Credits)

This course traces the development of Judaism in history and literature from the Babylonian Exile and the end of the biblical period through the origins of Rabbinic Judaism and the completion of the Babylonian Talmud (c. 650 CE). However, special emphasis is placed on Jewish culture in the late Second Temple period (c. 200 BCE to 100 CE) and its impact on the early Christian movement, including Jewish literature from the time of Jesus, lost texts of the Bible, new evidence from the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the few surviving historical sources of the Second Temple Period. In addition, students analyze how the Bible came to be and understand how sacred texts and their interpretations eventually became the new center of both Judaism and Christianity. Cross listed with JUST 3102.

RLGS 3150 The Bible & Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)

This course includes an advanced study of the Dead Sea Scrolls with a particular focus on the Bible as it appears in the Qumran library. We will discuss the variant versions of the Bible, some of which were previously unknown before the discovery of the Scrolls, and how the findings of the Scrolls may question the very idea of "Bible" itself in the context of the late Second Temple Judaism. Further, we will place particular emphasis on studying the way biblical texts were engaged, interpreted and even written by the authors of the Dead Sea Scrolls. In this way, we shall explore the origins of biblical interpretation and how the notion of the Bible came to be. Cross listed with JUST 3150. Prerequisites: None. The Scrolls will be read in English translation, but those with Hebrew reading skills will have an opportunity to read/translate portions of the Scrolls in community.

RLGS 3151 Dead Sea Scrolls (4 Credits)

The Dead Sea Scrolls represent one of the greatest manuscript finds of the twentieth century and have been said to be the most important discovery in biblical archaeology. These scrolls offer a rare window into early Judaism and Christianity and offer us the earliest and most important witnesses to the (Hebrew) Bible. This course covers the Dead Sea Scrolls in their historical, literary and religious context in English translation, together with relevant scholarly research. Cross listed with JUST 3151.

RLGS 3192 Christian Literature (4 Credits)

Reading and discussion of influential historic books pertaining to Christianity. This course will focus on a selection of primary texts either from a specific period of Christianity (such as early Christianity or medieval Christianity) or on a specific topic within the study of Christianity (such as monasticism or mysticism).

RLGS 3203 Christianity (4 Credits)

This is an introductory course about the Christian religion, with a substantial component devoted to experiential learning. The primary goal of the course is to acquaint students with the richness, dynamism and diversity of one of the world's largest and most influential religious traditions. Even those students who have some general knowledge of Christianity benefit from the disciplined approach of the academic study of religion.

RLGS 3205 Native Americans and Christianity in USA (4 Credits)

This class will help students explore the forms of Christianity that have emerged among the indigenous peoples of North America. In their struggles against and adaptation to Euro-American cultural forms, indigenous peoples have developed "contextualized" forms of Christian religiosity. Students will develop a careful understanding of the multiplicity and historical contingency of Christianity as it has spread throughout the world.

RLGS 3300 Psychology of Religion (4 Credits)

Beliefs, feelings and actions representing human religious response of experience; function of religion in individual life.

RLGS 3302 Islamic Fundamentalism (4 Credits)

This writing-intensive course introduces students to the history and scope of fundamentalist movements in the Muslim world, focusing on the Middle East. Beginning with a look at the internal traditions of renewal and reform built around the idea of a return to the fundament or origins of Islam, the course examines the rise of major movements from the 1700s to the present. Students will engage with key questions, including the following: What distinguishes fundamentalism from radicalism? How do Sunni and Shii fundamentalisms differ? What roles have these movements played in politics and society, and how might these evolve in the future? How might policy makers and others best approach fundamentalist groups? A basic knowledge of Islam is assumed; students wishing to enroll without this background knowledge will be provided supplementary readings.

RLGS 3315 Religion & Moral Psychology (4 Credits)

Philosophical foundations and research strategies of psychological studies of moral thought; Aristotelian, Kantian and utilitarian thought included, as well as religious dimensions of morality.

RLGS 3350 Culture, Psyche, and Religion (4 Credits)**RLGS 3370 Freud, Psychology, & Religion (4 Credits)**

Readings, discussion, and papers help students learn about the life, intellectual and social environment, and clinical and theoretical work of Sigmund Freud. Attention is given to the influence of Freud's work on the understanding of religion at the beginning of the 21st century.

RLGS 3448 Theory of the Subject: From Hegel to Žižek (4 Credits)

The great French philosopher Michel Foucault in his Collège de France lectures in the early 1980s characterized the theory of the subject as the very key to the development both of Western philosophy and Western thinking in general. This course will explore Foucault's thesis with reference to different theoretical models of subjectivity and "subjectification" (as Jacques Lacan calls it). It will do so through close readings of selections from the works of G.W.F. Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard, Lacan, Alain Badiou, and Slavoj Žižek as well as select portions of Foucault's 1981-82 lectures entitled The Hermeneutics of the Subject. This course is cross-listed with PHIL 3448.

RLGS 3452 Political Theology (4 Credits)

A general inquiry, focusing on the modern and postmodern eras, into various forms of philosophical reflection on the relationship between religion and political theory. Survey of the seminal ideas of such major thinkers as Kant, Hegel, Schmidt, Strauss, Derrida, Agamben, Asad, and Žižek.

RLGS 3453 Is God a Racist Sexist?: Black Liberation and Womanist Theology (4 Credits)

What is God's race? Does God have a gender? Is God on the side of the oppressed? Black liberation and Womanist theologies have asked these questions based on experience of black oppression in the context of the United States. African Americans have compelled to make sense of God in light of chattel slavery, Jim Crow laws, the Civil Rights Movement, and the Black Power Movement. This questioning continues in light of today's social environment. This seminar course will discuss the many strands of liberation theology in the United States, including Womanist theology. In addition to black liberation theology's methodologies and its challenges to the theological discipline, we will explore the origins and development of theological discourse in the late 1960s during the later part of the Civil Rights Movement and the emergence of the Black Power Movement. Black Theology is a theological perspective which draws on the diverse sources, including religious experience, art, literature, music, and lived narratives. These sources will inform our study. Students will engage critical voices that have shaped the movement such as James Cone, but also engage critiques of Cone and Black Theology. The course will also explore how liberation theologies attempt to deal with the problems of race, class, and gender. Student will be introduced to theological construction in African American communities and analyze the similarities and differences between these theological constructions.

RLGS 3454 Capitalism, Religion, Democracy (4 Credits)

The course explores the historical and contemporary relationship between capitalism, religion, and democracy at a theoretical level. Focus will be on the question of what exactly is capitalism as understood by key political philosophers and social theorists in relationship to the religious world views and values that authorize it. At the same time, the course will examine in what measure these world views and values also promote liberal democracy, or work against it, while offering a genealogical account of such phenomena as slavery, colonialism, gender and class domination, along with present day iterations of ethno-nationalism and neoliberal hegemony.

RLGS 3456 Kant on Religion (4 Credits)

A study of the philosopher Immanuel Kant's major writings on religion and their subsequent influence on critical theory and the philosophy of religion.

RLGS 3460 Nietzsche & the Death of God (4 Credits)

This course will involve an intensive reading and discussion of Friedrich Nietzsche's 'Thus Spake Zarathustra,' together with relevant associated materials, especially 'The Gay Science.' Cross listed with PHIL 3460.

RLGS 3465 Derrida and Postmodernism (4 Credits)

Cross listed with PHIL 3465.

RLGS 3470 Mysticism & Psychedelics (4 Credits)

The course will examine various texts, traditions, and practice from indigenous to New Age religions that fall under the general category of what has been historically labelled "mysticism." Special emphasis will be placed on chemical or plant-induced forms of altered consciousness, commonly known as "psychedelics" or "entheogens". that both simulate, and are frequently employed by different peoples in different times and places in tandem with, mystical experiences. The course will also examine the transcultural as well as the syncretic nature of mystical practices, spiritual disciplines, and the use of mind-altering substances, in particular with reference to the misuse of these forms by secular enthusiasts who are responsible for what is known as "cultural appropriation" or "neocolonial" misrepresentation.

RLGS 3475 Deleuze and Semiotics (4 Credits)

Examines the development of the thought of the famous French postmodern thinker Gilles Deleuze with special attention to his cultural and semiotic theory to the degree that it is relevant to the philosophy of religion. The course also investigates how Deleuze's work has shaped, and is beginning to push in new directions, contemporary postmodern philosophy. Prerequisites: must be at least junior standing and have completed at least two undergraduate courses in philosophy.

RLGS 3500 Islam (4 Credits)

Introduction to the history, faith, practice, culture(s), and politics of Islam, starting with the Judeo-Christian Near Eastern context in which it emerged and tracing its theological development and geographic spread around the world. Proceeding thematically along a broad historical frame, the course ends with an examination of the numerous, often competing, trends in contemporary Muslim communities.

RLGS 3502 Contemporary Islam (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to contemporary Islam. After a historical overview, the course looks thematically at different spheres of Muslim life. It considers changes that relate to political systems and forms of governance, styles of education, labor and professional work, changes in daily life habits such as timing and organization, changes in gender relations, and changes in religious authority. It also pays attention to the ways in which faith and practice are articulated through cultural practices like pop music and film.

RLGS 3503 Quran and Hadith (4 Credits)

This writing-intensive course introduces students to the key texts of Islam--the Qur'an and hadith--including their origins and meaning as well as how they have been interpreted by Muslims over time, and focusing as well on case studies that highlight issues of crucial relevance for today and the future.

RLGS 3504 Islam and Gender (4 Credits)

This upper-level course introduces students to key debates, historical developments, and thematic issues in the study of Islam and gender. It grounds this study in theoretical texts but takes a lived religions approach, focusing primarily on the production of "modern" gender norms in the colonial and post-colonial era. It proceeds thematically, with class sessions on sexualities, dress, reproduction, family roles, masculinities, pious self-construction, and the gendering of pilgrimage, and concludes with a look at contemporary and likely future debates.

RLGS 3505 Gender and Politics in Muslim Pop Cultures (4 Credits)

This undergraduate/graduate course introduces students to contemporary Muslim popular cultures, in the United States and around the world. It uses gender and politics as thematic lenses, taking a lived religions approach to phenomena that range from pious television programming to online efforts to spread Islamophobia.

RLGS 3570 Religion and Morality in the American Public Square (4 Credits)

Close focus on one or two moral issues in which religion is drawn into public debate in the contemporary U.S. Observation of the debate first hand at demonstrations, town meetings, and discussion groups, etc. Analysis of these observations is facilitated by readings on the subject and class discussion.

RLGS 3642 Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and Civil Rights (4 Credits)

In this course, students will explore the lives and religious thought of Martin Luther King, Jr. and Malcolm X, two of the most prominent black religious leaders during the height of the US Civil Rights Movement, often perceived as ideological opposites. Through engaging with their autobiographies, speeches, students will compare and contrast their thoughts on religion, race, and politics in the United States. During the course, students will be able to identify religious and political similarities and differences between the two leaders. We will also explore the development of their religious and ideological shifts in the context of the struggle for civil rights. Ultimately, we explore how their vision for racial justice developed into a call for social and economic equality and human rights.

RLGS 3645 Religious Nationalisms: A Comparative Approach to White Christian Nationalism and Hindu Nationalism (4 Credits)

This course examines the religious nationalism in the context of South Asia and the US. We investigate the religion, identity, politics, and power with readings/materials that explore historical memory, religious symbols/rituals/canon, political upheavals, and violent actions in both of these regions. In the context of South Asia, we will examine the British colonial period and post-independence India. In the US, we will focus our attention on post-Civil War politics and the development of the modern US polity. We necessarily interrogate the history and dynamism of important terms such as "religion", "nationalism", and "secular" in the context of Hindu Nationalism and white Christian Nationalism in South Asia and the US respectively. At the core of our inquiry is how specific religious traditions have been invoked in political contexts (and vice-versa), public displays of religiosity, and the complex dynamics of religion and the state.

RLGS 3693 Religion and the Media (4 Credits)

Interactions between religion and all forms of communications media in American life.

RLGS 3694 Religion in the Virtual Space: A Critical Theory Approach (4 Credits)

This course uses a critical theory lens to consider religious praxis, traditions, beliefs, canons, and rituals within virtual/digital spaces (e.g. websites, apps, social media, digital platforms for gaming, etc.). Students will be introduced to several scholars of virtual religious spaces and practices who use both netnography techniques and critical theory approaches (e.g. Wendy Chun, Lisa Nakamura, Michelle Zappavigna, Oliver Roy, etc.) as well classical scholars of semiotics and language (Judith Butler, Jacques Derrida, Walter Benjamin, Julia Kristeva, and others). Theoretical works are paired with ethnographic, historical and/or public scholarship/experiential to offer students a "lived perspective" critical approach to the topic of digital or virtual religion.

RLGS 3695 Digital Religion (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the study of digital religion from a lived religions perspective. It begins with an examination of the history, concepts and methods of the field, and continues with thematic explorations of digital religion scholarship across varied religious traditions. Students develop an understanding of how scholars study religion and spiritual identities, beliefs, and practices online, and how the religious and digital arenas influence and shape one another.

RLGS 3701 Topics in Religious Studies (1-4 Credits)

An exploration of various topics and issues related to the academic study of religion. The subject matter of the course varies and may be taught by the regular faculty of the department or a visiting scholar. Some offerings may include a travel component.

RLGS 3707 Religion and Film (4 Credits)

Understanding religion requires us to take culture seriously. In doing so, we must consider products of culture, including popular culture. This course engages both classic and more recent films as "texts" to be analyzed, not as mere entertainments or diversions. We focus not only on those films that identify themselves explicitly as "religious" or reflect a particular religious tradition, but also moved that render the subject more obliquely, which reveal – via image and sound – religion as a complex human activity.

RLGS 3708 First Americans in Film: Religion, Land, and Identity (4 Credits)

This course will explore, using a chronological approach, the history of Indigenous portrayal in the US Western Cinematic tradition. Students will be exposed to a variety of interweaving historical processes; including colonial history (with particular interest in Indigenous experience), the history of the film industry, the history of Indigenous representation in film, and the history of the 20 Century United States (with particular interest in Indigenous experience). The first two weeks of the course will be dedicated to the development of a theoretical toolbox. This toolbox – consisting of a series of theoretical concepts and analytical approaches – will function as the bedrock of the class and empower students, supplying the necessary lenses through which to analyze the films that will be screened throughout the quarter.

RLGS 3732 Feminist and Queer Theory in Religion (4 Credits)

This course explores the intersection of feminist and queer theories with religious studies. Beginning with feminist theory, we will trace the beginning of the feminist movement and consider the ways in which religion participated in and also resisted feminism. Moving into queer theory, we will critically examine gender and sexuality and center these topics in the field of religious studies. During the course, students will reinterpret religious texts through the use of feminist and queer theory, providing a challenging critique, an imaginative reframing, or even a queering of a sacred text.

RLGS 3740 Bodies and Souls (4 Credits)

This course examines the unique place of the body in biblical religion. We ask how the Bible and its interpreters have shaped current views on sex and the gendered body in Western society. How has the Bible been (mis)used in relation to current understandings of the physical body? Is the saying that a "human" does not have a body, but is a body as true for the Hebrew Bible as the Christian New Testament? How have Judaism and Christianity (de)valued sexuality, procreation, and celibacy? How do the biblical traditions shape our modern opinions about the ideal physical body and body modifications? How can we understand "out-of-body" experiences and notions of death and afterlife in Western religion? Students are encouraged to interpret the Bible and their own beliefs from a uniquely embodied perspective. Cross listed with GWST 3740, JUST 3740.

RLGS 3760 Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods (4 Credits)

This course explores how religious movements around the world both affect, and are affected by, the process of globalization. A major segment of the course is devoted to various theories of globalization and how they account for the increasingly important role of religion. Focus is largely on the relationship between Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.

RLGS 3814 Modern Hinduism (4 Credits)

Doctrines, practices and history of South Asian Hinduism; conceptions of Gods and gods; image worship and temples; and the influences of caste and gender on the experience of Hinduism.

RLGS 3820 Buddhism (4 Credits)

Buddhist life and thought from origins to present in India, Tibet, Japan and China.

RLGS 3832 Religious Lives: The Dalai Lamas (4 Credits)

This course explores the many lives of the Dalai Lamas and the transformation of a reincarnated religious teacher into the political leader of Tibet and, eventually, a worldwide religious personality. In order to understand that transformation, the course investigates the institution of the Dalai Lamas from historical, doctrinal, and ritual perspectives. We will look at the role of the Dalai Lama as an embodiment of the bodhisattva of compassion at the center of a tapestry of religious ceremony and ritual performances. The course will also consider the religious, ethical, and political thought of several of the most prominent Dalai Lamas, with significant attention given to the writings and work of the current, fourteenth, Dalai Lama.

RLGS 3885 Islamic Mysticism (4 Credits)

The origins and development of Islamic mysticism, including asceticism and the Sufi orders.

RLGS 3890 Religion and Diaspora (4 Credits)

When forced to leave a homeland, displaced communities frequently turn to religion to maintain identity and adapt to—or resist—new surrounding culture(s). This course examines the role of religion and identity in three Jewish and Christian communities living in diaspora and poses questions such as the following: What is the relationship between religion and (home)land? How have the biblical themes of exodus, diaspora, promise and restoration been applied to contemporary experiences? And how have our American stories been interpreted through the lens of the Bible? As part of the service learning component, students have the opportunity to work with religious and immigrant aid organizations in the Denver community. Cross listed with JUST 3890.

RLGS 3891 Justice: A Biblical Perspective (4 Credits)

This is a service learning course designed for religious studies undergraduate majors, though non-majors are welcome to enroll. Cross listed with JUST 3891.

RLGS 3892 Grant Writing for Community Engagement and Research (4 Credits)

This community engagement course introduces student to non-profit work and to scholarship on non-profit activities. It connects students with community partners, continuing the department's commitment to experiential learning and to engagement with living faith communities. Students spend course time discussing scholarship on grant writing and non-profit grant support and discussing logistical and other issues related to their community engagement partners. This course is intended to help provide advanced undergraduate and graduate students with arenas for future research, including possible thesis topics, while also offering a practical opportunity for professional development. Understanding 501(c)3 corporations and experience in writing grant proposals will be an asset for students planning to work in non-profits as well as for those continuing on to doctoral work.

RLGS 3893 Buddhism and Social Justice (4 Credits)

This course examines Buddhist theories and practices of social justice, with a focus on the contemporary global movements known as "Humanistic Buddhism" and "Socially Engaged Buddhism." The course covers topics such as: the roots of engaged Buddhism in social and political movements of 19th and 20-century Asia, the role of meditation and other Buddhist practices as both a support for and a means of social engagement, and Buddhist approaches to contemporary issues of racial justice, equality, economic development, and the environment. In the final analysis, the course asks whether the concept of justice makes sense within a Buddhist worldview, or if Buddhist concerns for social welfare hinge on an entirely different paradigm. This course is a community-engaged service learning course. As part of the course, students work with a local community partner to further their own community engagement work.

RLGS 3898 Dharamsala: Myth, Land, and Traditions (4 Credits)

This course explores the myths and stories that root cultural, religious, social and political traditions in the material landscape of India. It will explore the sacred spaces, images, rituals, and belief-traditions of the Himalayan region surrounding Dharamsala, India. As a study-abroad course, the materials, site visits, and community-engaged learning projects interrogate how myths operate as both cultural "glue" and demarcations of difference. Students participate in community-engaged learning placements to learn how myth creates and fosters cultural communities. Through site visits and readings we will learn how the "lived experience" of cultural belief-traditions, social and political practices, and sacred images and spaces are products of a unique marriage of land, story, and community. We will also have lectures and a Canvas site with pre-travel readings that will prepare you for the cultural and social belief-traditions we will encounter within Dharamsala. While in India, we will continue to read about ritual, devotion, stories of the land, social and political identities rooted in the land, and more. This course will be cross-listed with INTS for undergraduate and graduate elective credit.

RLGS 3991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)

RLGS 3995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)

RLGS 4050 History of Islam (4 Credits)

RLGS 4100 Hebrew Bible Backgrounds: Seminar in Ancient Israelite Religion (4 Credits)

This course is designed to train the student in the method and means of engaging in archeo-historical study of the Hebrew Bible. The content of this course focuses on ancient Israelite religion in Iron Age Palestine, particularly on emergent ideas about God ('El) and the development and evolution of the priesthood. Cross listed with JUST 4100.

RLGS 4150 Biblical Aramaic (4 Credits)

Reading seminar in Biblical Aramaic. This course focuses on the vocabulary, syntax and expression of Aramaic in the Bible as well as in some related post-biblical texts (Targums, Dead Sea Scrolls, etc.).

RLGS 4980 Internship (1-4 Credits)

Designed to provide masters students with valuable experience in non-profit, educational, faith-based, governmental, and related organizations. It helps students translate the knowledge and analytical skills learned in Religious Studies courses into a professional context, while exploring potential career paths and professional opportunities. Students interested in pursuing an internship must meet with the Undergraduate Advisor at the start of the previous quarter to discuss internship goals and identify potential placements. Students meet weekly with a faculty supervisor to monitor their internship experience, and complete the internship by writing a reflective essay. For MA students only.

RLGS 4981 Internship in Religious Community (1-4 Credits)

RLGS 4991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)

RLGS 4995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)