

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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The University of Denver's undergraduate religious studies program offers you the opportunity to study religion in ways that you won't find at other universities—as a major, a double major, or a minor.

- You'll learn about many of the major religious traditions of the world.
- You'll investigate how theories of religion can help you interpret the religious phenomena that you see around you.
- You'll learn about religion by experiencing it, for instance by going on class visits to religious institutions in Denver and by doing projects in local religious communities.
- You'll be able to take a community-engaged learning course, where you'll see up close why many religions emphasize the value of service to others.
- Finally, you'll learn what it means to do independent research in religious studies while developing excellent writing skills.

The department also serves other students who want introductory courses in religious studies or advanced courses coordinated with their special interests.

The religious studies major is a thoroughly interdisciplinary liberal arts program providing graduates with an excellent basis from which to pursue careers requiring imagination, problem-solving, communication skills and an awareness of human diversity.

Major

Bachelor of Arts Major Requirements

(183 credits required for the degree (<http://bulletin.du.edu/undergraduate/undergraduateprograms/traditionalbachelorsprogram/bachelorofarts/>))

Majors take a minimum of 40 credits in religious studies including 12 credits of courses focused on specific religious traditions; a four-credit theory course; and six elective courses. Students are encouraged to participate in accredited international programs with religious studies content. Honors students and majors demonstrating high academic achievement in religious studies may pursue "distinction in the major" by completing a thesis or customized project on a topic of specific interest. They will design their project in consultation with a religious studies faculty mentor and present a proposal to the department faculty.

The following course lists are suggestions and not exhaustive. If you have questions about whether a course satisfies one of the requirements, please consult with the department advisor.

Code	Title	Credits
Global Religions		
Choose 3 course at the 2000 or 3000 level:		12
RLGS 2250	Introduction to African American Religions	
RLGS 2301	American Indian Religion	
RLGS 3001	Judaism	
RLGS 3102	Early Judaism	
RLGS 3203	Christianity	
RLGS 3192	Christian Literature	
RLGS 3500	Islam	
RLGS 3503	Quran and Hadith	
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism	
RLGS 3820	Buddhism	
Theory		
Choose 1 course at the 2000 or 3000 level:		4
RLGS 2106	Religious and Social Justice in Vienna	
RLGS 2118	"Women as the Gateway to Hell": Gender and Identity in South Asia	
RLGS 2119	Caste, Race and Colonialism	
RLGS 2401	Social Justice in a Global Context: Theory and Practice	
RLGS 3002	Creation & Humanity	

RLGS 3300	Psychology of Religion
RLGS 3315	Religion & Moral Psychology
RLGS 3350	Culture, Psyche, and Religion
RLGS 3370	Freud, Psychology, & Religion
RLGS 3448	Theory of the Subject: From Hegel to Žižek
RLGS 3452	Political Theology
RLGS 3453	Is God a Racist Sexist?: Black Liberation and Womanist Theology
RLGS 3454	Capitalism, Religion, Democracy
RLGS 3456	Kant on Religion
RLGS 3460	Nietzsche & the Death of God
RLGS 3465	Derrida and Postmodernism
RLGS 3570	Religion and Morality in the American Public Square
RLGS 3642	Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and Civil Rights
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 3695	Digital Religion
RLGS 3732	Feminist and Queer Theory in Religion
RLGS 3740	Bodies and Souls
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods
RLGS 3890	Religion and Diaspora

Electives

Choose 6 courses at the 2000 or 3000 level:

24

RLGS 2002	Comparative Religion and Interreligious/Interfaith Dialogue
RLGS 2004	Anthropology of Jews & Judaism
RLGS 2005	Philosophy of Religion
RLGS 2010	Hildegard: Mystic, Musician, Muse
RLGS 2012	Jewish Politics and Political Jews in the United States
RLGS 2022	Religion and Empire
RLGS 2026	Race: Black, Jew, Other
RLGS 2102	Judaism, Christianity & Islam
RLGS 2103	Religions of China & Japan
RLGS 2104	The Bible as Literature
RLGS 2108	Islam in the United States
RLGS 2109	Religions of Tibet
RLGS 2110	Buddhism in the U.S.A.
RLGS 2111	Islam and United States Politics
RLGS 2112	Major Islamic Thinkers 1900s-2000s
RLGS 2114	Roots of Yoga and Tantra: Methodologies and Modern Practice
RLGS 2115	Common Figures in the Bible and Qur'an
RLGS 2116	American Mythology
RLGS 2117	Religions of India
RLGS 2251	Contemporary Gospel Music: Religion, Culture, and the Black Church
RLGS 2202	New Testament
RLGS 2205	Women, Gender, and the Bible
RLGS 2303	Lived Religions
RLGS 2310	World Christianities
RLGS 2501	Islam on Film
RLGS 2600	Religion and Popular Culture
RLGS 3024	Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters
RLGS 3086	The Emergence of Monotheism
RLGS 3150	The Bible & Dead Sea Scrolls
RLGS 3151	Dead Sea Scrolls

RLGS 3205	Native Americans and Christianity in USA
RLGS 3302	Islamic Fundamentalism
RLGS 3470	Mysticism & Psychedelics
RLGS 3502	Contemporary Islam
RLGS 3504	Islam and Gender
RLGS 3693	Religion and the Media
RLGS 3708	First Americans in Film: Religion, Land, and Identity
RLGS 3707	Religion and Film
RLGS 3832	Religious Lives: The Dalai Lamas
RLGS 3885	Islamic Mysticism
RLGS 3891	Justice: A Biblical Perspective
RLGS 3893	Buddhism and Social Justice

Total Credits
40

Secondary Major

Secondary Major Requirements

40 credits. Same requirements as for BA degree.

Minor

Minor Requirements

The Religious Studies minor is a carefully planned program of 20 credits that works well with other majors in the liberal arts and sciences, as well as other fields. In order to complete the Religious Studies minor, the student will complete the following requirements:

3 Global Religions courses

1 Theory course

1 Elective course

Please note: Requirements may be fulfilled with both 2000 and 3000 level courses. Any Religious Studies course may count toward the Elective requirement.

Here is a sample course list for how requirements for a minor in Religious Studies might be fulfilled:

Code	Title	Credits
Global Religions - choose 3 courses taken at 2000 or 3000 level		12
RLGS 2250	Introduction to African American Religions	4
RLGS 2301	American Indian Religion	4
RLGS 3001	Judaism	4
RLGS 3102	Early Judaism	4
RLGS 3203	Christianity	4
RLGS 3192	Christian Literature	4
RLGS 3500	Islam	4
RLGS 3503	Quran and Hadith	4
RLGS 3814	Modern Hinduism	4
RLGS 3820	Buddhism	4
Theory - choose 1 course at the 2000 or 3000 level		4
RLGS 2119	Caste, Race and Colonialism	4
RLGS 2401	Social Justice in a Global Context: Theory and Practice	4
RLGS 3002	Creation & Humanity	4
RLGS 3300	Psychology of Religion	4
RLGS 3350	Culture, Psyche, and Religion	4
RLGS 3370	Freud, Psychology, & Religion	4
RLGS 3453	Is God a Racist Sexist?: Black Liberation and Womanist Theology	4

RLGS 3454	Capitalism, Religion, Democracy	4
RLGS 3456	Kant on Religion	4
RLGS 3570	Religion and Morality in the American Public Square	4
RLGS 3642	Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X and Civil Rights	4
RLGS 3694	Religion in the Virtual Space: A Critical Theory Approach	4
RLGS 3732	Feminist and Queer Theory in Religion	4
RLGS 3740	Bodies and Souls	4
RLGS 3760	Globalization and Religion: Theory and Methods	4
RLGS 3890	Religion and Diaspora	4
Elective - choose 1 course at the 2000 or 3000 level		4
RLGS 2010	Hildegard: Mystic, Musician, Muse	4
RLGS 2022	Religion and Empire	4
RLGS 2104	The Bible as Literature	4
RLGS 2110	Buddhism in the U.S.A.	4
RLGS 2114	Roots of Yoga and Tantra: Methodologies and Modern Practice	4
RLGS 2116	American Mythology	4
RLGS 2117	Religions of India	4
RLGS 2303	Lived Religions	4
RLGS 2501	Islam on Film	4
RLGS 2600	Religion and Popular Culture	4
RLGS 3024	Maimonides: Greek, Islamic, and Christian Encounters	4
RLGS 3151	Dead Sea Scrolls	4
RLGS 3302	Islamic Fundamentalism	4
RLGS 3448	Theory of the Subject: From Hegel to Zizek	4
RLGS 3452	Political Theology	4
RLGS 3470	Mysticism & Psychedelics	4
RLGS 3502	Contemporary Islam	4
RLGS 3707	Religion and Film	4
RLGS 3832	Religious Lives: The Dalai Lamas	4
RLGS 3460	Nietzsche & the Death of God	4

Requirements for Distinction in the Major in Religious Studies

- Minimum 3.5 cumulative GPA by the end of the Winter Quarter of the Junior Year
- Minimum 3.75 major GPA by the end of the Winter Quarter of the Junior Year
- Be nominated by a faculty member or the undergraduate advisor (in consultation with other faculty members in the department) to pursue Distinction in the major (majors of high academic caliber who plan to study abroad for all or part of the Junior Year may be recommended by the undergraduate advisor for nomination earlier)
- Upon review of the entire faculty, be invited to prepare a curriculum plan for the final year of study in the major
- Identify a faculty member with whom to consult in preparing the curriculum plan and who will oversee the final project (see below)
- Submit a curriculum plan, to be approved by faculty, by which the student will be able to demonstrate an *area of concentration within the major*, one that brings the required and upper-division, elective courses within the department and approved, upper-division courses outside the department into a certain “constellation” or coherence
- Submit a portfolio of representative work undertaken in the major
- Submit a final project to be designed in consultation with a faculty mentor in the department. The final project may take the form of:
 - A rewritten and expanded research paper taken from a Religious Studies course;
 - A separate senior “thesis”;
 - A translation effort;
 - A substantive service learning assignment/commitment with a considerably sophisticated reflection component and evaluation by the supervisor;
 - A creative work (e.g., poetry, a play, a film, a photographic essay, etc.).
- Meet with faculty mentor and one other faculty member of the department at the end of the quarter prior to graduation at which time the portfolio and final project will be reviewed and a vote of recommendation to receive Departmental Distinction taken.

Course plans serve as a sample quarter-by-quarter schedule for intended majors. The sample course plan below shows what courses a student pursuing this major might take. Students should anticipate working closely with their major advisor to create a course of study to complete the degree.

Ideally, Common Curriculum (<http://bulletin.du.edu/undergraduate/undergraduateprograms/traditionalbachelorsprogram/degreesanddegree requirements/>) requirements other than Advanced Seminar should be completed during the first two years. Students should anticipate taking an average course load of 16 credits each quarter.

Ways of Knowing courses in the areas of Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture (<http://bulletin.du.edu/undergraduate/undergraduateprograms/traditionalbachelorsprogram/selectingadegreeprogram/courseplans/ai-society-courses/>) and Scientific Inquiry: Society and Culture (<http://bulletin.du.edu/undergraduate/undergraduateprograms/traditionalbachelorsprogram/selectingadegreeprogram/courseplans/si-society-courses/>) introduce students to University-level study of disciplines in the arts, humanities and social sciences. Credits earned in Ways of Knowing courses may also apply to a major or minor.

The major in Religious Studies comprises 40 hours (10 courses) distributed as follows:

3 Global Religion courses

1 Theory course

6 Elective courses

We recommend the following plan of study, which should be pursued in consultation with the Department's undergraduate advisor

First Year					
Fall	Credits	Winter	Credits	Spring	Credits
FSEM 1111		4 WRIT course (often WRIT 1122)		4 WRIT course (often WRIT 1133)	4
RLGS: 2000-level course		4 RLGS: 2000-level course		4 RLGS: Global Religions	4
Common curriculum course		4 Common curriculum course		4 Common curriculum course	4
Common curriculum course		4 Common curriculum course		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
		16			16
Second Year					
Fall	Credits	Winter	Credits	Spring	Credits
RLGS: Global Religions		4 RLGS: Global Religions		4 RLGS: Theory or Elective	4
Common curriculum course		4 Common curriculum course		4 Common curriculum course	4
Common curriculum course		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Common curriculum course	4
Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 INTZ 2501 ¹		2 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
		16			14
					16
Third Year					
Fall	Credits	Winter	Credits	Spring	Credits
Study Abroad		4 RLGS: Theory or Elective		4 RLGS: Elective	4
Study Abroad		4 ASEM		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
Study Abroad		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
Study Abroad		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
		16			16
Fourth Year					
Fall	Credits	Winter	Credits	Spring	Credits
RLGS: Elective		4 RLGS: Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective	4
Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4 Second Major, Minor, or Elective		4	
		16			16
					12
Total Credits: 186					

¹ INTZ 2501 is required for any student who studies abroad, and may be taken in any quarter within the year prior to studying abroad.

Additional Notes

If you have maintained a 3.75 GPA in the major and have achieved an overall DU GPA of 3.5 by the end of the Winter Quarter of your Junior year AND you wish to pursue Distinction in the Major (p. 4), which requires the completion of a final project, you should consult with the undergraduate advisor, identify a faculty mentor, and submit a curriculum plan during the Spring term of this year.

RLGS 2002 Comparative Religion and Interreligious/Interfaith Dialogue (4 Credits)

This course is an introduction to the comparative study of religion, a venerable sub-discipline in the field of religious studies. It is also an introduction to a new, emerging sub-discipline: interfaith or interreligious dialogue. It seeks to equip students with the knowledge base and skill set needed to engage religious diversity in ways that promote, admittedly, idealistic, 21st-century goals: cooperation, stability, and peace. The course seeks to increase religious literacy by introducing students to a variety of religious traditions by means of site visits to several religious communities and interaction with religious leaders and practitioners. Through this course, students will gain experience-based knowledge of religious traditions other than their own.

RLGS 2004 Anthropology of Jews & Judaism (4 Credits)

This course is cross-listed with ANTH 2004 and JUST 2004. This course pairs anthropological texts about American Jews and Judaism with related film, television, and literary representations. The objective of this course is to teach course participants to use anthropology as an interpretive lens through which to consider American Jewish life and culture. Through the study of texts on Jewish nostalgia and memory, class, race, gender, and heritage tours, course participants will learn the history of the study of Jews within anthropology and the place of Jews in the history of disciplinary anthropology. The ultimate objective of this course is to introduce anthropological theory and method in a way that provides students with a powerful analytical tool for thinking about contemporary Jewish life.

RLGS 2005 Philosophy of Religion (4 Credits)

What is God? Can God be known or is faith precisely a relationship to something that cannot be known in the ordinary sense? What is the relationship between God and morality? Between God and science? Is it more reasonable to believe that your religion is the only path to God or more reasonable to believe that God is manifest in many ways across different cultures? Is it reasonable to believe in God at all? If it is reasonable to believe in God, what are the reasons? And if believing in God is not based on reasons in the ordinary sense, are there philosophical grounds for believing in God anyway? This course takes a "God friendly" approach to philosophical questions about religion, setting out to investigate ontological and epistemological questions about belief-in-God toward the goal of understanding different ways that philosophers over the years have philosophically gone about developing, upholding, and talking about relationship with God. The course includes consideration of philosophers from analytic and continental traditions, from American and European schools of thought, from ancient, medieval, modern and post-modern traditions, and from Greek, Islamic, Jewish, and Christian traditions. Thinkers to be addressed include Pascal, Anselm, Plantinga, Van Inwagen, Hick, Hume, Descartes, Spinoza, Plato, Aristotle, Ibn Tufayl, Averroes, Maimonides, James, Levinas, Marion, Badiou, Rosenzweig, Aquinas, Buber, Cohen, Mill, Lycan, Kant, Wittgenstein, Kierkegaard, and Kafka. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with PHIL 2005.

RLGS 2008 Stereotyping and Violence in America Today (4 Credits)

This course is cross-listed with PHIL 2008, COMN 2008, JUST 2008. This course offers students the opportunity to explore key issues relating to diversity and inclusion in the contemporary United States, focusing on the themes of stereotyping and violence, from multiple disciplinary perspectives. Students will engage with scholarly and popular culture artifacts to examine the kinds of stereotyping and types of violence, visible and invisible, that characterize and challenge political, social, cultural, economic, religious, and educational life in today's United States, and will do so by working with the course instructor as well as faculty members from across the arts, humanities, and social sciences. Students will work together to connect the given week's speaker's assigned readings and insights to readings and insights from previous weeks' speakers; assignments and classroom discussion will in this way be very interdisciplinary and will compare and contrast multiple diverse points of view and disciplinary lenses on the question of stereotyping and violence. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2010 Hildegard: Mystic, Musician, Muse (4 Credits)

Hildegard of Bingen was a polymath even by the standards of her own era, the twelfth century. She was active as a musician, artist, mystic, theologian, natural healer, philosopher, and diplomat. This interdisciplinary team-taught course will read across many academic fields of study including religion, women/gender/sexuality studies, music, and art history as well as primary sources. Students will experience 12th century scholarly and every-day practices through in-class projects such as manuscript illumination or cookie baking, and participate in experiential learning through journaling, meditation, and singing. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2011 Religion, Environmentalism, and Politics (4 Credits)

How does religion mediate the relationship between people and the natural world? How do different religious traditions understand and interpret the natural world and humans' responsibility to and for it? Is it possible to reconcile an understanding of the world as divinely created with human destruction of the environment—and, if not, then what are the political consequences? In this course, we will consider a variety of disciplinary approaches to topics related to religion, environmentalism, and politics, taking Abrahamic and indigenous religions as our key examples. From urban gardening to green Islam to Standing Rock to eco-feminism, we'll use theories about religion and culture to understand the complex intersections of faith, policy, and planetary crisis. The course includes a community engagement component that will bring us to a local faith-based urban farm where we will discuss course texts as we help prepare for the 2020 growing season. Cross-listed with ANTH 2011 and JUST 2011.

RLGS 2012 Jewish Politics and Political Jews in the United States (4 Credits)

Milton Himmelfarb famously quipped that "Jews earn like Episcopalians, and vote like Puerto Ricans." This statement captures the surprising loyalty of American Jews to liberalism and the Democratic party despite the group's significant socioeconomic achievement in the post-World War II era. This course considers Jewish political behavior in the United States through a variety of disciplinary lenses. Our study will be enriched through archival research in the Beck archives (held at DU) and through conversations with local political figures. The course will also track and analyze relevant developments for Jews and politics related to the 2020 Presidential election. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society requirement for the Undergraduate Core Curriculum. Cross-listed with JUST 2012.

RLGS 2014 Religious Existentialism: Christian and Jewish (4 Credits)

Existentialism focuses on the human experience of living, often with a focus on the sheer freedom of the human condition. Religious existentialism subtly modifies this picture through its own vision of human freedom as the ultimate encounter between the human subject and God (with 'God' understood in various ways). The religious existentialist in this sense philosophically explores that which is most-fully-human as a moment of relation and encounter between self and that which is beyond self. Starting with Sartre's non-religious statement of existentialism in *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946), we go on to examine the Christian and Jewish existentialisms of Kierkegaard (1813-1855), Tillich (1886-1965), Buber (1878-1965), and Heschel (1907-1972). In the course of our reflections, we compare non-religious with religious approaches to basic questions about self, God and world, and we consider the relationship between Christian and Jewish existentialist approaches to these questions. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross-listed with PHIL 2014 and JUST 2014.

RLGS 2022 Religion and Empire (4 Credits)

The course will explore in both a past and present context how religious forms, traditions, and practices are integrally bound up with the rise and fall of empires. It will also explore from a theoretical standpoint certain social, political, and economic factors that explain the development and historical persistence of imperial governance as well as the role of religion in both preserving and undermining empire. It will also touch on the phenomenon of "religious nationalism" in these processes. Specific empires to be studied include the Roman empire, the "Holy Roman empire", Islamic empires, the British and American empires (including what has come to be known as "neoliberalism"). This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2025 Race, Social Justice, and Religion in the US Public Square (4 Credits)

The US public square is a fundamental aspect of civic engagement and identity construction. This course uses the lenses of race and social justice to explore how religious expression impacts the cultural, social, political, and personal narratives/discourses that comprise the modern public square. We will consider public spaces in the context of anti-Asian and anti-Black racism as well as Islamophobia and the intersectional privileges and prejudices these communities negotiate. Issues such as immigration, borders, racialization, entrenched beliefs and traditions dovetailing with structural racism in the American context will be discussed each through video modules from the Interfaith Youth Core along with supplemental readings. By centering the lived practices and discourses through which access and agency is forged within public spaces (material and virtual), I want students to learn how they are both participants in and makers of these spaces. This course asks students to interrogate the ways in which their personal identities intersectionally determine how public spaces are constructed, which public spaces we enter, and how we participate in those spaces. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2026 Race: Black, Jew, Other (4 Credits)

In its investigation of philosophical writings on race and racism, this course explores a range of existential and phenomenological lenses for interrogating race and racism, with a focus on the shared theoretical and practical intersections of anti-Black and anti-Jew discourse. The course aims to help participants read and understand difficult primary philosophical (and some theological) texts—many of which are cited and engaged by contemporary writings across a number of disciplines. In this respect, we work through philosophical writings related to race, exile, "negritude," "the wandering Jew," and "otherness" by engaging such authors as: Sartre, Wright, De Bois, Levinas, Senghor, Fanon, Freud, Appiah, Jankelevitch, and Cone, alongside Gilman's work on the "Jew's Body" and "Jewish Self-Hatred," Bernasconi's work on the phenomenology of race, and discourses of "Other-as-disease" in American and Nazi eugenics. In all of its content, the course aims to engage participants with key issues and questions around race and racism, including extending the implications of anti-Black and anti-Jew discourses / practices to a range of other anti-Other discourses / practices at play in the world around us. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross-listed with JUST-2026 and PHIL-2026.

RLGS 2070 American Jewish Experience (4 Credits)

In the aftermath of World War II, the United States emerged as the largest, wealthiest, and most organized Jewish community in the world. Taking the premise that America is a Jewish center as its key organizing principle, this course introduces and challenges theories of diaspora and looks at American Jewry's religious and institutional innovations. The course will proceed inductively, taking Denver-based resources and experiences as starting points for an expansive exploration of American Jewish life, culture, and religion. We will focus on mainstream narratives alongside religious and cultural expressions at the margins of American Jewish life. Cross-listed with ANTH 2070 and JUST 2070.

RLGS 2102 Judaism, Christianity & Islam (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the three major monotheistic religious traditions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In the process of tracing the long and rich histories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, we examine the beliefs and practices that became central and definitive for Jews, Christians, and Muslims. We begin with the ancient heritage of each religion (scriptures, founders, early institutions). Then we explore how these foundational traditions were preserved and re-invigorated in response to centuries of social change and critical moments of political upheaval. Most significant, in this regard, is the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim encounter with their respective holy Scriptures—as generation after generation of adherents have attempted to understand the revealed words of God, to proclaim their continual relevance for all places and all times and to inscribe them upon their bodies and hearts through prayer, worship, and daily life. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2103 Religions of China & Japan (4 Credits)

This is an introduction of some of the major East Asian religious and ethical traditions, focusing on Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto. By examining both translations of sacred texts as well as scholarly analyses, we explore the basic ideas, practices, and historical development of these varied and interconnected traditions. Special attention is paid to how people incorporate East Asian religious and ethical ideas and beliefs into contemporary life and how gender shapes the experience of religion. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2104 The Bible as Literature (4 Credits)

The Bible has been one of the most important works in all of Western society. In this course we read the Bible as a masterpiece of literature. Rather than focusing on theological questions about this work as inspired scripture, we instead focus on its rich literary qualities and explore some ways in which these stories have influenced modern society. Reading select passages, we discuss its literary genres, forms, symbols and motifs, many of which are important in literature today. Of the latter, we encounter stories of creation and hero tales, parables, apocalyptic literature, and themes of paradise and the loss of Eden, wilderness, covenant, and the promised land. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with ENGL 2104 and JUST 2104.

RLGS 2106 Religious and Social Justice in Vienna (4 Credits)

This special travel course provides an opportunity for students to learn how certain major religions are globally engaged in the promotion of social justice through humanitarian relief work and cultural exchanges. In addition to a brief survey of the historical relationship between the beliefs, teachings, and social practices of the major Western traditions, the course offers hands-on experience and interaction with Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant relief agencies as well as other non-governmental organizations in Vienna, Austria, which has become the international center for UN-directed human services and humanitarian relief efforts as well as global headquarters for leading NGOs. Students discover how the culture, history, and geography of Vienna have nurtured the vast global human services "economy" to which these religious organizations contribute and which are built around the work of the United Nations. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2108 Islam in the United States (4 Credits)

A historical introduction to the presence of Islam and Muslims in the United States, from an examination of the first Muslims in North America, to the substantive influence of the minority Indian evangelical Ahmadiyya movement, to Islam in African American communities. Also examines contemporary Muslim communities in the U.S. and the ways in which ritual and faith are today developing with "American" accents. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2109 Religions of Tibet (4 Credits)

This course explores the religious terrain of Tibet by looking at the historical and cultural development of the four main Tibetan Buddhist traditions: Nyingma, Sakya, Kagyu and Geluk, as well as the indigenous religion called Bon. Topics include the sacred landscape of Tibet; key doctrinal features; cultural artifacts like sacred biographies, art, and poetry; the 20th-century spread of Tibetan Buddhism from the Himalayas to North American communities; the future of Tibetan Buddhism in exile; and China and the West. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2110 Buddhism in the U.S.A. (4 Credits)

Exploration of different viewpoints on complex issues related to the assimilation, acculturation and reinvention of Asian Buddhist traditions both locally and globally in the past 150 years. Students consider the "two-way traffic" between recent developments in various traditions of newly Americanized Buddhism and their respective cultures of origin through the processes of globalization and transnationalism. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2111 Islam and United States Politics (4 Credits)

This course offers students a historically grounded introduction to the relationship(s) between Islam and United States politics. Students consider the role played by Islam and Muslims in early American political thought, Americans' relationships with Muslims abroad and at home, as well as evangelization efforts. It examines the impacts of the Nation of Islam, the Cold War, Iranian Revolution and Gulf War I, as well as of the September 11 terror attacks, the Iraq and Afghanistan wars, the 2006 and 2008 elections, and concludes by reflecting on the 2012 election and suggesting how Islam might impact U.S. politics over the next decade. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2112 Major Islamic Thinkers 1900s-2000s (4 Credits)

This course offers students a substantive introduction to major Islamic thinkers of the 20th and 21st centuries. Starting with Abu `Ala Maududi, whose work on Qur'anic interpretation and the meaning of jihad laid the groundwork for new waves of radical activism in the modern Muslim world, this course exposes students to the works of "movers and shakers" like Sayyid Qutb and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. Students engage these thinkers through a mix of primary and secondary sources, developing a sense of context as they work through their arguments. The course continues with some of the major later 20th-century Islamic thinkers active in Muslim-minority spaces, focusing on Bosnian Grand Mufti Mustafa Cerić and the Moroccan-French scholar Mohammed Arkoun. It concludes by looking at two major figures of the early 21st century, noting how they blend intellectual and political activism: Iranian cleric Mohsen Kadivar and American scholar Amina Wadud. Throughout the course, student groups present on various contemporary issues, helping them develop presentation and writing skills while allowing them to apply course knowledge to real-world issues. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2114 Roots of Yoga and Tantra: Methodologies and Modern Practice (4 Credits)

This class will explore the pluralistic origins of yoga and tantra both within South Asia and a global context, the relationship between yoga (union, control) and tantra (ritual/material technologies), how they function as a ritual/spiritual practices, and conclude by examining how yoga and tantra have become popular, transnational phenomena. The first half of the class focuses on the history of yogic/tantric traditions, texts, and communities while the second is devoted to study of the guru/shiṣya (teacher/student) relationship as the foundation of modern yoga. Some of the issues we will engage include different conceptions of the human self, how and why particular cultural and religious practices cross geographical and cultural boundaries, the role of the guru, and secularization. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2115 Common Figures in the Bible and Qur'an (4 Credits)

This course offers students a thematic introduction to the key common figures in the Bible and Qur'an, focusing on the major prophets, from Adam to Jesus, as well as Eve and Mary. Grounded in the primary source texts while exposing students to classic and contemporary scholarly work on these figures, it concludes with a look at the figure of God in the two scriptures. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2116 American Mythology (4 Credits)

Myths convey social and moral values. Myths, moreover, serve as conceptual models for society and furnish "symbolic articulation of the social patterns" of a given society. In this class, students will establish clear connections between social order and the myths that sustain it, against the view that myths are merely imaginary, misguided perceptions of reality with little social value. In this course, you will need to ask yourself, "How do each of these myths translate into social behavior? In other words, how have these myths been acted out historically and how are they "performed" today? The United States of America has always had a strong, mythic sense of identity, mission, and destiny. It is worthwhile to reflect for a semester on how the "idea of America" has taken shape and is continuing to evolve and diversify. Robert Bellah introduced the influential concept of an American "civil religion"—a secular myth of America. In addition, we must understand that America is the result of contact between at least three different groups of people: Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans. The functional equivalents of creed, scripture, prophets and religious mission are seen in the Declaration of Independence, the Founding Fathers and Manifest Destiny. Concepts of freedom, the pursuit of life, liberty, and happiness, democracy, and the right to bear arms flow from these myths. Beyond the notion of a master myth of America, we will discover that there are other myths of America that are themselves proper objects of study. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2117 Religions of India (4 Credits)

This course introduces students to the religions of India, which include Jainism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, Christianity, Judaism, and Hinduism. These religious traditions are distinct but always in dialogue and often in competition with one another. Students will explore how different religious communities intersect and overlap in different contexts and historical periods, including in religious spaces: temples, monasteries, pilgrimages sites, and sacred spaces. Students will learn about histories, rituals, and literature, with a focus on lived religions, past and present. This course counts toward the Analytic Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2118 "Women as the Gateway to Hell": Gender and Identity in South Asia (4 Credits)

This course explores the role of women in public and private spaces in South Asia through the lens of religious praxis and belief. We will explore the ways in which Hindu, Jain, Buddhist, Sikh, Muslim, Christian, and Adivasi (indigenous) traditions have portrayed the role of women in scripture and consider these textual proscriptions and descriptions in the context of the lived experience of these belief systems. The primary aim of the course is to expose students to the complex relationship between the deified "feminine" and the construction of gender within modern South Asia. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2119 Caste, Race and Colonialism (4 Credits)

This course explores intersections of social, political, and personal structures that shape the various identities we hold. We have chosen three categories: caste, race, and colonialism, to showcase how identities emerge as unique intersectional sites of contestation and negotiation between individual difference, historical context for how to understand that difference, and the ways social/political structures valorize difference. To foreground lived experience in the construction of identity, our course will draw on a number of resources including: blogs, opinion pieces, podcasts, peer-reviewed articles, selections from books, documentaries and film, and social media both within and outside the US. The goal of this course is to encourage students to consider how "identity" and "privilege" are contingent terms that operate on multiple levels (e.g. personal, social, and political) and help uncover the networks of vulnerability, power, and access/accessibility that inform identity. Furthermore, we invite students to engage with these terms through practical assessments (e.g. producing a podcast) in order for them to "see" how they both produce and are "produced" by the various public squares in which they participate. Students will deconstruct the categories of caste, race, and colonialism in the context of socio-political and cultural structures (e.g. religion, gender identity, ability, political beliefs, etc.) We ask students to consider the following questions: In what ways, do these categories shape our personal and public identities? How do these categories work within contemporary public and private spaces? This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2202 New Testament (4 Credits)

This course takes a multifaceted approach (historical, literary, and critical) to the writings that comprise the Christian New Testament. The New Testament are read as a collection of primary documents that chronicle the primitive Church's slow and often painful process of self-definition. In these writings it is possible to discern the tension that arose because of the strong religious and cultural ties early Christianity maintained with Palestinian Judaism, from which it emerged as a sectarian or reform movement. The careful reader also finds evidence of the new religion's encounter with the Greco-Roman world from whose variegated ethos and culture it borrowed considerably on the way to becoming an important religious force in the first century. In exploring the New Testament, then, we attempt to recover something of the sense of what it meant to be a Christian in New Testament times. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross listed with JUST 2202.

RLGS 2205 Women, Gender, and the Bible (4 Credits)

From Eve to Mary Magdalene, women play essential roles in biblical texts. While many courses, books, and Bible studies focus primarily on men, this course will focus women included in biblical and apocryphal texts as well as the way the Bible has been used to regulate gender in society, leadership, churches, and homes. Feminist and womanist biblical criticism will be used throughout this course, as will a focus on gender critical readings. Through critical reading and reflection on both primary texts and secondary texts, students will form their own views of the representations of female characters, named and unnamed, in the Bible. Additionally, students will ponder the ways that these texts still affect women today. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2250 Introduction to African American Religions (4 Credits)

This course will explore the nature and the meaning of black religion. We will examine the historical development of African American religion in the United States and explore diverse African American religious groups, such as the Nation of Islam, the Moorish Science Temple of America, Black Jews of Harlem, and others. Specific attention is given to the ways in which African American religious groups have developed in North America, especially the United States and the Caribbean, during slavery and beyond. The course will have three sections. First, we will attempt to define religion in the larger context of religious studies. Second, we will investigate how black religions and black religious scholars deploy Africa as a deep symbol. Finally, we will survey the historical and theological development of a variety of black religions that have been influential in North America. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2251 Contemporary Gospel Music: Religion, Culture, and the Black Church (4 Credits)

This course seeks to examine the ways in which gospel music, and contemporary black gospel music in particular, has impacted not only black church culture but broader society in general. Through audio and video media, readings, and class discussion, we will discover how gospel music has influenced black church culture and popular culture. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement. Cross-listed with MUAC 2251.

RLGS 2301 American Indian Religion (4 Credits)

This course will provide an overview of the religious beliefs and practices, histories, cultures, and contemporary lives of the Native American communities in the Rocky Mountains (Ute) as well as those commonly referred to as the "Great Plains Indians" (primarily the Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Sioux, and Crow). Made up of thirty different tribes with seven different language groups, Plains Indians constitute a diverse range of languages, customs, social structures, and religious beliefs. As we learn about the various worldviews and lifeways of Rocky Mountain and Plains Indians peoples, we will also explore the relationships between religion and culture, religion and society, religion and land, and religion and conflict. We will watch several films covering a variety of Native American issues. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2303 Lived Religions (4 Credits)

The concept of "lived religions" has become prominent in religious studies since the 2000's. While people may think of religions as sets of sacred writings, rules, and rituals, the "lived religions" approach focuses on the ways that people incorporate religion into their activities. The approach is new enough that scholars have not yet come to full agreement on what the term "lived religions" should include and what it implies about religions and how to study them. The course will make room, therefore, to debate the advantages and drawbacks of studying religions through the ways people use religion to shape their life. Students will examine examples of how people live their religion and trace the relationships of these practices to religious teachings and ideas. This effort will involve asking a variety of questions. How closely are religious practices related to teachings and ideas? Does a specific religion put greater emphasis on engaging in specific activities or on agreeing with particular teachings? If people's behavior does not fit with a religion's teachings but the people still consider it to be related to key aspects of religion, does it count as religious? Or have these people moved away from religion into a practice that is spiritually meaningful but not religious? Or is spirituality something even more sharply different from religion? Or is spirituality also part of religion? If we look closely at how people in a religious tradition live, what do we see that we would not notice if we were looking at the religion as only a system of beliefs? For instance, does the sense of time of people who adhere to the religion's calendar of remembrances differ from the sense of time of people who do not? And what specifically would we do to learn about religion, if we concentrate on people's actions? In opening up such inquiries students will learn both about studying religions and about major facets of religious traditions. The course will require reading and successful completion of tests. Visits to off-campus sites and completion of reports on site visits will facilitate learning through encounter and participation. Students will also undertake a project using concepts from the course to imagine and interpret lived religion in behaviors or in aspects of the physical or social world. The religions, practices, and sites for study, observation, and interpretation—as well as the assignments—may vary each time the course is offered. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2310 World Christianities (4 Credits)

This class will be an exploration of the variety of Christian expressions that have developed around the globe. As Christianity has spread through conquest, missionary work, immigration, trade, and other means, new converts and their offspring have had to reconcile Christian doctrines, rituals, and ethics with the beliefs and practices of their own cultures. This has led to what some scholars have referred to variously as mixing, syncretism, hybridity, creolization, contextualization and/or enculturation. This class, while considering the value of these terms, will, however, take the following as its foundational perspective: from the early Christian community to contemporary denominational specificity, all forms of Christianity have emerged as a result of cultural contextualization. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2401 Social Justice in a Global Context: Theory and Practice (4 Credits)

Theories of social justice, beginning with the ancient Hebrews and Greeks and running up through the modern era. The religious sources of these ideas, drawn primarily from the monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, are profiled. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2501 Islam on Film (4 Credits)

This course uses the medium of film to introduce students to the history, faith, practice, culture(s), and politics of Islam. Focusing on feature films and documentaries, it employs film to open up a broad spectrum of questions relating to personal piety, gender equity, generational conflicts, social class, governmental repression, and ritual practice. Proceeding thematically along a broad historical frame, the course focuses on the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries, presenting a balanced picture of life in Muslim-majority and Muslim-minority countries and highlighting the complex picture of Muslim life today. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2600 Religion and Popular Culture (4 Credits)

Although religion and popular culture are often seen as separate conceptual spheres—the former dealing with the “sacred” and the latter with the “profane”—these two spheres are deeply intertwined and shape one another. Religion often expresses itself in popular culture through the arts and various forms of media, while popular religion frequently expresses itself through religious memes and other representations. This course will explore the complex relationship between religion and popular culture. By studying film, comics, music, tattooing, and other cultural products, we will discover how beliefs, ideals, practices, institutions from various religious traditions shape popular culture and how symbols that are embedded in popular culture shape religious traditions. This course counts toward the Analytical Inquiry: Society and Culture requirement.

RLGS 2980 Internship (1-4 Credits)

Designed to provide undergraduate majors and minors 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. Restrictions: junior or senior standing; at least 20 credits of RLGS courses for majors or at least 12 credits for minors.

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 3201 Religion and Revelry in Rome (4 Credits)

Rome is a city filled with references to religion. The Pantheon and the Roman forum remind visitors of the centuries where Romans worshipped gods and goddesses; the Vatican and numerous other Catholic churches exemplify the religion that dominates the current context of Italy: Christianity. This travel course will immerse students in both the ancient and the contemporary religious revelry that is found in Rome and the surrounding regions. Students will experience Italy through visits to museums, community dinners, archaeological sites, tours, food, and dialogue.

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 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. It focuses 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 3988 Study Abroad Resident Credit (0-18 Credits)**RLGS 3991 Independent Study (1-10 Credits)****RLGS 3995 Independent Research (1-10 Credits)**