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REL1300 Introduction to World Religions Staff

This course is an introduction to the academic study of the major religions of the world. The course will cover the religious traditions of Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the process of comparing the religions of the world, it will be the responsibility of each student to think critically about the historical evolution, systems of belief, ritual practices, institutional developments and cultural expressions of each religious tradition. A range of reading materials and writing assignments have been chosen to provide a framework within which to engage a variety of religious issues and to understand the significance and relevance of religion in world history. *This course is now also offered online! Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and the Cross-Cultural X requirements*

REL2121 Religion in the U.S. Dr. Corrigan

This course focuses on religions in America with attention to economic change, politics, immigration, gender, regionalism, reform, feeling, intolerance, and racial and ethnic diversity. We will examine the religious ideas, rituals, and forms of association of religious groups ranging from those that first took shape in America (e.g. Native American religions, Mormons, Christian Scientists, Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh-Day Adventists, Nation of Islam) to Roman Catholic and mainline Protestant denominations, various Jewish congregations, Asian religions in America, and religious aspects of popular culture (e. g. New Age religions, urban ethnic religions). *Fulfills Liberal Studies - History & the Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements.*

REL2210 Introduction to the Old Testament Staff

The word "Bible" is derived from the Greek word "biblia" which means "books." While revered as a single book, the Bible is a collection of many texts that were composed by different authors at different times for different reasons. This course is an introduction to the critical study of this assorted literature and the world in which it was produced. We will examine individual texts of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament within their historical contexts while taking into consideration other methodological approaches such as literary criticism and theology. *Fulfills Liberal Studies – Cultural Practice and the Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements.*

REL2240 Introduction to the New Testament Dr. Kelley/Staff

An introduction to the literature of the New Testament and to the academic approaches to it. The distinctive concerns and literary features of individual texts will be studied in the contexts of the historical development of the early Christian church, ancient Judaism, and the wider Greco-Roman world. Emphasis throughout will fall on the variety of interpretations of the Christian message as Christians encountered new social circumstances and theological challenges. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements.*

REL2315 Religions of South Asia Staff

Overview of religions in the South Asian cultural region, emphasizing Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, and Islam. The history and cultural contexts of these traditions will be explored with particular attention to sacred stories, holy people, religious leadership, and gender issues. This course also serves as an introduction to the academic study of religion. No previous background is required. Students will gain familiarity with the basic concepts of the religious

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traditions of South Asia, will develop interpretive skills in the academic study of religion, and will have the opportunity to develop research and writing skills by exploring a topic of special interest. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements. Section two is an online section of this course.*

REL3112 Religion and Fantasy

This course offers an overview of theological and anti-theological elements in twentieth and twenty-first century fantasy literature from authors Lewis, Tolkien, Rowling, and Pullman. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice requirement.*

REL3142 Religion: Self and Society Dr. Day

This course is structured around the methodological principle that we should abandon the habit of treating some discourses or practices as being irreducibly distinct from mundane political and economic life. That is to say, religion should not be viewed as a substantive term of analysis but as a piece of political rhetoric—a way of strategically representing some all-too-political aspects of collective life as non-political. After exploring the history of political theorizing about the proper role of religion in collective life, we turn to examine two case studies which probe the socio-taxonomic problems that the American Constitution creates by enshrining the “free exercise of religion” in the First Amendment. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice requirement.*

REL3145 Religion & Gender Staff/Dr. McVicar

This course examines the impact of gender on religious beliefs and practices and the impact of religious beliefs and practices on gender, cross-culturally. We will be looking at the intersections of religion and culture, in general. In doing so, we will look at a history of feminist thought in religious studies and the current gender issues that have arisen through women’s examinations of religious thought and the study of religion. We will use a variety of texts, some film, class discussion, and writing to explore these topics as fully as possible. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3170 Religious Ethics Staff

Religious Ethics: In this class, you will get the chance to examine the moral problems raised by issues such as war, capital punishment, lying, the environment, and sex in the context of religious views about love, duty, good, and evil (yes, this is the big stuff). *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3171 From Kierkegaard to Thoreau Staff

REL3340 The Buddhist Tradition Dr. Cuevas/Dr. Yu

This course is a historical and thematic survey of Buddhism from its beginnings through the modern period. Topics covered include origins and history, doctrine, ethical beliefs, meditation, ritual, and monastic and popular traditions. Some attention will also be given to contemporary forms of Buddhism in America. Part I of this course begins with some foundational concepts in Buddhism. Part II explores the Buddhist schools, theories, and practices in different regions of the world and over a span of 2,500 years. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3351 **Japanese Religions** **Dr. Buhrman**
This course investigates the influence of Japanese religious traditions on Japanese life, culture, and history; as well as the influence of history on modern Japanese religiosity and perceptions of religion. Many aspects of Japanese culture or national character are credited to (or blamed on) Japanese religions. Despite this, on national surveys the majority of the Japanese regularly claim to have no religion. This course introduces major aspects of Japanese religious traditions and examines this paradox in light of the history of religion in Japan, and Japanese definitions of religion, practice, and belief. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3363 **Islamic Traditions** **Dr. Gaiser**
A historical and topical survey of Islam as a religion and civilization that focuses on the formative and classical periods of Islamic history. The course is primarily concerned with: the life and career of Muhammad the Prophet of Islam, the scriptural sources of Islam (i.e. the Qur'an and the *Sunna*), the development of the Muslim community and its principle institutions (schools of thought, law, theology, cultural life and mystical traditions). The course will acquaint you with significant aspects of Islam as a religion, and to help you think through some of the basic questions of human religious experience in light of the responses given to those questions by the great sages and saints of the Islamic tradition. *Fulfills Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Diversity in Western Culture (Y) requirements.*

REL3370 **Religion in Africa** **Dr. Hellweg**
Understanding contemporary Africa means understanding African religions. Religion is a preoccupation across the continent—economically, politically, and socially. Through divination, spirit possession, sacrifice, and other practices, Africans engage what we call “religion” in ways that challenge our understanding of the term. We have no choice, then, but to recognize the sophistication and complexity of African religions. They encompass and determine aspects of childbirth, gender, healing, sexuality, personhood, and death; their impact is far-reaching. Yet, writers like Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens have portrayed religions as the root of all ignorance. On the contrary, religions organize vast arrays of practical knowledge and work in Africa. The study of African religions therefore offers a unique way of understanding how religion sustains the worlds we inhabit—that is, how we might best define “religion” as a working knowledge of the cosmos we inhabit. African religions do not find the measure of their truth in some distanced “natural” world but in the social dynamics and conflicts that give rise to them. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice and Cross-cultural (x) requirements.*

REL3505 **The Christian Tradition** **Staff**
This course is an introduction to Christianity. We will examine the historical narrative of the tradition from its beginnings in the first century through twentieth-century developments. We will also focus on the doctrinal side of the tradition by reading primary texts of key Christian thinkers. *Meets the Liberal Studies- Cultural Practice requirement.*

REL3541 **American Protestant Thought** **Dr. Porterfield**
This course traces the historical development of American protestant thought by examining the writings of influential thinkers from different time periods. The course considers the social and

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and laity alike. But Buddhist biography is more than a popular vehicle for religious instruction; it is also a particular type of historical writing, one that emphasizes individual agency and views the subject as a point at which diverse historical forces converge. This is apparent also in religious autobiography, which promises a more intimate portrait of the “self” in history in relation to the world. In this seminar we examine the nature of Buddhist sacred life writing with a focus on traditional Buddhist hagiography and autobiography in India, Tibet, China, and Japan. Issues addressed will include biography as history, sociocultural constructions of experience, aspects of the self-consciousness of personality, and the availability of particular identity roles transmitted through texts. The course will run on a seminar format with active and in-depth discussion of readings and intensive individual writing projects.

REL4359 **Chinese Buddhist Studies** **Dr. Yu**
This seminar covers the history and historiographical issues in the study of Chinese Buddhism. It examines scholarly constructions of Buddhist Studies as a field in general and the historiography of Chinese Buddhist Studies specifically, with a focus on the shifts that took place in scholarly representations and paradigms. The seminar reveals this methodological shifts in the field from philology to philosophy; from missionary concerns to sectarian orientations; from doctrinal studies to anthropological approaches.

REL4359 **Readings in Classical Japanese** **Dr. Buhrman**
An introduction to the grammar of Classical Japanese and instruction in how to do research in primary historical sources. Proficiency in modern Japanese language is required.

REL4366 **Shi'ite Islam** **Dr. Gaiser**

REL4491 **Humanitarian Intervention** **Dr. Twiss**
An exploration into the history, ethics, politics, and critique of humanitarian intervention from its origins in the 19th century to its recent reformulation in the emerging doctrine of the responsibility to protect (R2P). Materials drawn from history, international law, moral and political theory, and the social sciences. Case studies from around the world. Seminar format, including oral presentations and a final research paper.

REL4510 **Christianity after the New Testament** **Dr. Kelley**

REL4905 **DIS: Conservatism & Religious Right** **Dr. McVicar**

REL4932 **Honors Work in Religion**

GRADUATE COURSES:

RLG5035 **Introduction to the Study of Religion** **Dr. Erndl**
This seminar explores the theoretical and methodological foundations of the academic study of religion. We will examine arguments and evidence on which scholars ground the assumption that religion exists (or not) as an object of study and that, as a result, religious *studies* exists (or not)

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as a viable academic discipline. Our approach will be critical. We will examine religion as a heuristic category and religious studies as a form of interdisciplinary research in which authors have explored ritual and symbolic concerns as much as themes just as easily labeled economic, historical, political, or social.

RLG5195 **Against Postmodernism** **Dr. Day**

RLG5204 **Intermediate Hebrew** **Dr. Goff**

A close reading of the Joseph narrative (Genesis 37, and 39-45) and brief selections from poetic and legal texts. The primary emphasis will be on vocabulary, grammar, and style, but some attention will be given to issues of textual and source criticism. There will also be exercises that will provide a review and solidify the grammar and vocabulary from Biblical Hebrew I and II. **Prerequisite:** Two semesters of Modern or Biblical Hebrew.

RLG5318 **Classical Chinese Texts** **Dr. Yu**

This is a seminar in the reading of selected primary sources in classical Chinese for the study of Chinese religions. Part one of the course will be a concise review of Chinese grammar. Part two of the course will focus on reading a small sampling of texts from different historical periods and genres, including canonical literature, ritual manuals, poetry, and hagiographies and local gazetteers. The course will also introduce students to a variety of tools and methods for the study of Chinese literature, including standard lexical and bibliographic references, digital resources, and secondary scholarship in modern languages. There will be weekly assignments for Part One of the course and weekly translation assignments and other exercises for Part Two of the course. **Prerequisite:** One year Chinese language or familiarity with written Chinese and with permission from Dr. Yu.

RLG5354 **Buddhist Biography** **Dr. Cuevas**

RLG5354 **Chinese Buddhist Studies** **Dr. Yu**

This seminar covers the history and historiographical issues in the study of Chinese Buddhism. It examines scholarly constructions of Buddhist Studies as a field in general and the historiography of Chinese Buddhist Studies specifically, with a focus on the shifts that took place in scholarly representations and paradigms. The seminar reveals this methodological shifts in the field from philology to philosophy; from missionary concerns to sectarian orientations; from doctrinal studies to anthropological approaches.

RLG5354 **Readings in Classical Japanese** **Dr. Buhrman**

RLG5356 **Readings in Tibetan** **Dr. Cuevas**

RLG5367 **Sem: Shi'ite Islam** **Dr. Gaiser**

Seminar on Shi'ite Islam, focuses on the manifold expressions of Shi'ism from its origins to the present day. The course will examine the political divisions within the early Islamic community that led to the development of the *shi'a*. After examining the earliest Shi'a sects, the course will shift to the major juridical and theological developments within Ithna-'Ashari ("12er") Shi'ism (such as the doctrine of the Imamate and the occultation and return of the 12th Imam). The

