

## FALL 2023 RELIGION COURSES

### Undergraduate Courses

#### **HBR 1102**

#### **Beginning Hebrew I**

**Dr. Levenson**

In HBR 1102 and 1103 students will study virtually the entire grammar and gain a good working vocabulary of Biblical Hebrew. After the completion of HBR 1103, they will be prepared to read any portion of the Hebrew Bible with the aid of a dictionary and commentary. Since the basic grammar and vocabulary of Modern Hebrew are substantially the same as Biblical Hebrew, the course can also serve as a foundation for the study of the contemporary language. The FSU Modern Languages Department offers a sequence of courses in Modern Hebrew, which may be taken instead of or together with Biblical Hebrew courses at the same level. *The Arts and Sciences language requirement can be satisfied by either Intermediate Biblical Hebrew (HBR 2222) or Modern Hebrew (HBR 2220). For information about the Hebrew minor, contact Dr. David Levenson ([dlevenson@fsu.edu](mailto:dlevenson@fsu.edu)).*

#### **HUM2937**

#### **Christianity, Art, Materiality (Honors)**

**Dr. Hazard**

Images and things wage a peculiar double power in Christian history. On the one hand, Christians have used a variety of materials in their religious lives, from paintings to books, lithographs, photographs, roadside memorials, relics, t-shirts, and more. At the same time, particularly since the sixteenth-century Protestant reformations and the expansion of colonial empires, some Christians have worried about the propensity of material objects to become “idols” and seduce or enthrall viewers into temptation and evil. This seminar explores the visual and material cultures of Christianity from its beginnings to the present, including various forms of Christianity including Catholicism, Protestantism, Mormonism, and Orthodoxy. The focus will be on working toward a final project on an Image or Thing of your choosing. Along the way we will host several special guests. *Prerequisite: admission to the honors program. Meets Liberal Studies: History (H) and Scholarship in Practice (SIP).*

#### **IDH 2602**

#### **Us and Them: Polarized Society**

**Dr. Moret**

In this course, students learn about the roots of those divisions and practice developing strategies to navigate our divided society. *Prerequisite: Admission to the Honors Program.*

#### **IDH3140**

#### **Freedom & Religion: Muslim & Liberal Perspectives**

**Dr. Moret**

This course addresses issues such as free speech, sexual mores and identity, and compulsory military service. The course examines the ways that Muslims and liberals negotiate the notions of freedom and religion. *Prerequisite: Admission to the Honors Program.*

#### **REL1300**

#### **Introduction to World Religions**

**Dr. Durdin & 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. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D). This course is also offered online.*

#### **REL2121**

#### **Religion in the United States**

**Dr. Corrigan & Staff**

This course is designed to introduce students to the major themes, figures, and directions of religion in American history, with an eye toward ways that social and cultural contexts have shaped the religious experience of Americans in different places and times. Since it is impossible to cover all religious traditions in one semester, this course will consist of both a general survey

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of religion in the U.S. and a series of case studies designed to provide a closer look into some of the religious groups and ideas that have shaped this country. *Meets Liberal Studies: History (H) and Diversity (D).*

**REL2210** **Intro to the Old Testament** **Dr. Goff & 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. development of early Christianity. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D), and State mandated writing (W) requirements.*

**REL2240** **Intro to the New Testament** **Dr. Kelley & Staff**

This course introduces students to the writings of the New Testament in the context of the historical development of early Christianity. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL), Diversity (D), and State mandated writing (W) requirements.*

**REL 2315** **Religions of South Asia** **Arya Adityan**

This course studies the history and culture of the religious traditions of South Asia. A study of the manifestations of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism, and Christianity in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D).*

**REL 2350** **Religions of East Asia** **Dr. Yu**

This course is an introduction to the history, thought, and practice of religion in China, Korea, and Japan. Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and popular religious traditions from ancient through modern times are covered. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D).*

**REL3112** **Religion and Fantasy** **America Wolff**

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. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and State mandated writing (W) requirements.*

**REL 3128** **Topics in Am Religion: Religion in the American Civil War** **Burns**

This class will study the American religious landscape of the Antebellum, Civil War, and Reconstruction periods. Particular attention will be paid to the religious lives of enslaved people, religion during the Civil War, and the religion of the Lost Cause. *Meets Liberal Studies: History (H)*

**REL3138-01** **Religious Intolerance in America** **Lisa Mackay-Ring**

This course examines the long and ongoing history of religious intolerance in America with respect to a wide range of religious groups and agnostic/atheistic persons, and with an eye to the ways in which religious intolerance intersects with race, ethnicity, class, and gender.

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**REL3142** **Religion, the Self & Society** **Dr. Day**  
This course covers interpretation of religious phenomena by the major social theorists of modern times. The course is divided into two parts: the psychology of religion and the sociology of religion. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS- CUL).*

**REL 3145** **Gender and Religion** **Staff**  
This course considers the impact of gender on religion. Includes cross-cultural studies, theoretical works, and gender issues within religious traditions. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL), Diversity (D), and State mandated writing (W) requirements.*

**REL 3152** **Religion, Race and Ethnicity** **Staff**  
This course examines the relation between race, ethnicity and religious beliefs in a cross-cultural context. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E), and Diversity (D).*

**REL3170** **Religious Ethics** **Dr. Lane & Staff**  
This course discusses contemporary moral problems such as deception, sexual activities and relations, war, and the economy from the standpoints of major religious traditions. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E), Diversity (D), and State mandated writing (W) requirements.*

**REL3171-01** **Topics in Ethics: Ethics of Sabotage (Honors)** **Dr. Day**  
It is often presumed that moral behavior must be *constructive* or *edifying*. As children we are told things like: “It is better to light a candle than curse the darkness” and “If you can’t say anything nice, don’t say anything at all.” This course explores the strategic wisdom and normative justifications for behaviors which specifically aim to *destroy, damage, obstruct, undermine, or belittle*. Simply put, we will be considering the conditions under which *destructive* or *unedifying* activity might be viewed as morally commendable—why, where, when, and how *deliberate acts of sabotage* may be fairly described as a *virtuous*. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E). Honors Students Only.*

**REL3171-02** **Topics in Ethics: Ethical Self: East and West** **Dr. Zhang**  
The course puts into dialogue the views on human nature and how to live a good life of different religious and philosophical traditions (Aristotelian philosophy, Christianity, Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and critical theories). By doing so, it endeavors to sensitively compare these visions of the self without capitulating to nihilism, relativism, or self-satisfied cultural chauvinism. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E).*

**REL3171-03** **Topics in Ethics: Mid East & N. Africa Politics** **Scott Bursey**  
This course introduces students to the complex ethical, moral, and social issues that arise from interactions of religious and political ethics in the domestic and international arena of the contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA). From Arab nationalist movements, to the life and times of the Prophet Muhammad, the goal of this course is to introduce a critical and alternative perspective on the complex nature of religious and political ethics in MENA, across a range of case studies and historical episodes. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E).*

**REL3171-04** **Topics in Ethics: Islamic Ethics** **Thomas Greene**  
In this class, we will investigate the way Muslims answer the question of what it means to live a good life by looking at the sources of their faith and various ethical topics. These topics include

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democracy and governance, human rights, social justice, pluralism, jihad, gender, sexuality, and death. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E).*

**REL3171-05**                      **Topics in Ethics: Public Health in Africa**                      **Dr. Hellweg**  
By exploring responses in Africa to tuberculosis, HIV and AIDS, and Ebola, we can trace the development of a more ethical, more collaborative approach to public health, both on the continent and beyond. This model takes African definitions of personhood and the cosmos seriously, putting religious studies at the center of medical concerns. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E).*

**REL3171-06**                      **Topics in Ethics:**                      **Dr. Shinnar**  
   **Honors: Religion, Literature, and the Self**  
The course investigates the way that reading and composing literature has functioned as a technology of self-understanding and identity formation from antiquity to the present. We will draw on theoretical discussions of the production of the “self” and the “other” to study the development of European and American literary and autobiographical traditions and the way that these traditions play a role in cultivating contemporary individual and communal identities while also enforcing social hierarchies and divisions. The course will be organized around a close examination of significant literary works, including works produced by authors from marginalized groups, ranging from Augustine’s *Confessions* and Dante’s *Inferno* to Primo Levi’s *Survival in Auschwitz* and Alison Bechdel’s graphic novel *Fun Home*. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E). Honors Students Only.*

**REL3171-07**                      **Topics in Ethics: Illness, Trauma, & Disability**                      **Dr. Shinnar**  
This course investigates cultural, religious, social, and ethical concerns that emerge from illness, disability, and trauma. The course will be organized around a study of the biblical Book of Job and its reception in Jewish and Christian literature, religious works, philosophy, theater, and film from the Bible to Tony Kushner’s *Angels in America*. Students will be introduced to concepts from disability studies, medical sociology, and trauma studies to employ as analytical tools. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E).*

**REL3180**                                      **Bioethics**                                      **Dr. Kelsay**  
This course offers an introduction to theoretical and practical issues in bioethics from the perspective of a variety of religious and secular positions. *Meets Liberal Studies: Ethics (E), Scholarship in Practice (S)).*

**REL 3293**                      **Topics in Biblical Studies: Apocalypse Now and Then**                      **Dr. Goff**  
The apocalyptic tradition is a foundational element of the three major monotheistic religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In this course we will read apocalypses in order to get a sense of their characteristic features and how they developed in response to historical and cultural factors. We will give special attention to Jewish apocalypses, and then turn our focus to how Christianity appropriated and reformulated this tradition. We will also focus on non-western cultures and the contemporary world, with an eye towards how people utilize apocalyptic traditions to articulate what is wrong with the world and what to do about it. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL)*

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## REL3340

## The Buddhist Tradition

**Dr. Cuevas**

This course surveys the Buddhist tradition from its beginnings through the modern period. Some attention to its contemporary forms. ***Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D) requirements.***

## REL 3348

## Buddhism & Mythology of Evil

**Dr. Cuevas**

Is there a concept of evil in Buddhism? This course addresses that central question by examining traditional Buddhist interpretations of delusion, sin, and misfortune, as well as exploring the multiple and shifting representations of the “demonic” in textual, historical, and social contexts. Specifically, the course investigates the role of demons and other troublesome spirits at the center of Buddhist traditions across Asia, including India, China, Japan, and Tibet, drawing together popular Buddhist myths and legends, canonical scriptures, and ritual practices. Emphasis will be on gaining comparative understanding of Buddhist beliefs and practices surrounding demonic entities and assessing whether a concept of “evil” plays a role in Buddhism and in Buddhist communities. Key topics include the Buddhist cosmos and demonology; the Satan-like figure of Mara; relationships between gods, demons, and human beings; ghosts and local spirits; magic and sorcery; demon-caused illness, exorcism, and healing. ***Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL), Diversity (D), and Scholarship in Practice (S).***

## REL 3349

## Buddhist Meditation

Dr. Yu

This course examines the theories and practices of Buddhist meditation in different Buddhist traditions in their social, cultural, and religious contexts. The course is both historical and experiential. Students will explore how Buddhists articulate prescriptive, doctrinal ideas in relation to descriptive meditation experiences. Part One of the course establishes the foundation of Buddhist soteriology. Part Two explores theories and practices of meditation from East Asia to South Asia to the modern West. The course includes class discussions, experiential meditation practices, and readings. No previous background in Buddhism is required. ***Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D).***

## REL3370

## Religion in Africa

**Drs. Hellweg**

This course examines the variety and complexity of religious practices and beliefs on the African continent, and in particular how African discourses of religion challenge our most fundamental understandings of the term religion. ***Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D).***

## REL 3363

## Islamic Traditions

**Dr. Gaiser**

This course provides a historical and topical survey of Islam as a religion and civilization, focusing on the formative and classical periods of its 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); and the development of the Muslim community and its principal institutions (schools of thought, law, theology, cultural life, and mystical traditions). ***Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL) and Diversity (D).***

## REL 3431

## Critics of Religion

**Dr. KavYa**

This course is an introduction to the major thinkers and texts in the critique of religion as it developed in the 19th and 20th centuries in the west. Beginning with Schleiermacher, the course

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moves on to consider the so-called “masters of suspicion”—Feuerbach, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. By means of a close examination of central texts, students explore the meaning of a critique of religion, the structure of religious consciousness, the place of religion with respect to other forms of culture, the problem of religion and alienation, and the possibility of a critical faith. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Ethics, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).*

**REL3505** **The Christian Tradition** **Jesse Lee**  
This course studies the major beliefs, practices, and institutional forms of Christianity in historical perspective. *Meets Liberal Studies: Cultural Practice (LS-CUL).*

**REL4044** **What is Religion? What is Religious Studies?** **Dr. Durdin**  
What is “religion”? How and why do we study “religion”? Is “religion” a manifestation of some sacred, *sui generis* reality that human beings can only dimly apprehend? Or is “religion” a rickety ideological superstructure built on the foundation of colonial, economic, and gendered oppression? Perhaps it’s a psychological projection, a delusion from which humanity must free itself. Or maybe “religion” is simply the creation of the scholar who studies it. This course provides a survey of classical and contemporary theories and methods that have tried to answer these questions along with many others. Through close readings of a sampling of theoretical and critical works, this course will provide students with a basic introduction to the various disciplinary frameworks that underlie the academic study of religion. We will cover a wide array of approaches for studying “religion” ranging from anthropology to psychology, from feminist theory to cognitive science. Along the way we will ask, “what is ‘religion’?” and “and how should it be studied?” We will end the course with two recent books that build on the various methods covered in the first ten weeks of the course. These works--on Scientology, a new religious movement, and popular spirituality in contemporary American culture--offer challenging reassessments of the scholarly and popular category of “religion.” Students should expect a reading-, writing-, and speaking-intensive course that surveys a complex and evolving field of study. Students will be asked to read carefully, offer written reflections on the material covered in class, and present material to their peers. Finally, students will write a final reflective paper assessing the status of “religious studies” in the university. *Meets Upper-Division Scholarship in Practice (UD-SIP) and Oral Communication Competency (OCC).*

**REL4190** **SEM: Nationalism & Religious Violence** **Drs. Kelsay & McVicar**  
This class will explore the relationship between religion, nationalism, and violence in a global, comparative context. The course will open with theoretical readings on the nationalism and religion, and then move on to consider case studies of the core themes of the course.

**REL4290** **SEM: Josephus** **Dr. Levenson**  
A seminar focusing on a close reading of extensive selections from the writings of Josephus with the aims of exploring the literary, religious, and historical dimensions of Josephus’ writings and of gaining through a study of his works a full introduction to the history of Jews and Judaism from Alexander the Great to the end of the first century CE. Among the topics considered will be Josephus and Jewish sectarianism (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes), the story of Masada in history and literature, the rise and fall of Herod the Great, martyrdom and noble death, “Messianic” movements, rebel factions and their leaders, the figure of Titus and the Roman

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Siege of Jerusalem, Josephus and biblical interpretation, Josephus and early Christianity, and the reception of Josephus in medieval and modern Judaism and Christianity.

**REL4203** **Classical Hebrew Texts** **Dr. Levenson**

This course consists of intensive work on specific religious texts in classical Hebrew (ancient or medieval). Choice of texts vary. May be repeated to a maximum of twelve semester hours.

**Prerequisites:** *HBR 2230 or Permission of the instructor required.*

**REL 4393** **Islam in North America** **Dr. Gaiser**

This course surveys in seminar format the manifestations of Islam in the United States, as well as American perceptions of Islam and Muslims. The course begins with the early 18th century and examines early American attitudes toward Muslims, and then moves to the experience of Islam among African-Americans. The latter third of the course is devoted to the assimilation of Muslim immigrants in the US, and how the issues of race, gender, “trans-nationalism” and stereotypes impact the American Muslim community.

**REL4491-01** **SEM: Religious Thought** **Dr. Zhang**

**Topic: Comparative Religious Ethics.** Intended for advanced undergraduate students. May be repeated to a maximum of nine semester hours. *Prerequisite: instructor permission required.*

**REL 4511** **Christianity after the New Testament** **Dr. Kelley**

This course studies Christian thought, institutions, lifestyles, and literature in their social, cultural, and historical contexts from the time of Jesus to the early Middle Ages.

**REL4905** **Directed Individual Study**

This course consists of supervised reading and research on selected topics.

## Graduate Courses

**Dr. Hazard**

**RLG5195-01**

**SEM:**

**Drs. Kelsay &McVicar**

**Topic: Nationalism and Religious Violence.** This class will explore the relationship between religion, nationalism, and violence in a global, comparative context. The course will open with theoretical readings on the nationalism and religion, and then move on to consider case studies of the core themes of the course.

**Dr. Levenson**

**Topic: Intermediate Hebrew.** This course consists of intensive work on specific religious texts in classical Hebrew (ancient or medieval). Choice of texts will vary by semester. ***Prerequisite: HEB2230 or instructor permission.***

**RLG5297-01**

## SEM: Biblical Studies

**Dr. Levenson**

**Topic: Josephus.** A seminar focusing on a close reading of extensive selections from the writings of Josephus with the aims of exploring the literary, religious, and historical dimensions of Josephus' writings and of gaining through a study of his works a full introduction to the history of Jews and Judaism from Alexander the Great to the end of the first century CE. Among the topics considered will be Josephus and Jewish sectarianism (Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes), the story of Masada in history and literature, the rise and fall of Herod the Great, martyrdom and noble death, "Messianic" movements, rebel factions and their leaders, the figure of Titus and the Roman Siege of Jerusalem, Josephus and biblical interpretation, Josephus and early Christianity, and the reception of Josephus in medieval and modern Judaism and Christianity.

**RLG5305-01**

## SEM: History of Rel

**Dr. Corrigan**

**Topic: Religion in Colonial America.** The migration of religion to the Americas from the sixteenth to the early nineteenth century focusing on the contestation of religious aspects of space, slavery, race, commerce, colonialism, and empire. The ways in which encounters frequently were characterized by suspicion, fear, and violence, and how religious tropes – and particularly the demon and heretic—were deployed by Europeans to conceptually organize encounters with indigenes and with each other.

**RLG5318**

## Classical Chinese Religious Texts

**Dr. Yu**

This seminar covers selected primary-source readings in classical Chinese about Chinese religions. Readings are drawn from a sampling of historical periods and genres, including canonical literature, philosophical treatises, ritual manuals, poetry, hagiography, and local gazetteers. Students learn to use lexical and bibliographic references, digital resources, and other research tools. May be repeated to a maximum of twelve credit hours. ***Prerequisite: one year of Chinese language or familiarity with written Chinese.***

## RLG 5368

## Islam in North America

**Dr. Gaiser**

This course surveys in seminar format the manifestations of Islam in the United States, as well as American perceptions of Islam and Muslims. The course begins with the early 18th century and examines early American attitudes toward Muslims, and then moves to the experience of Islam



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among African-Americans. The latter third of the course is devoted to the assimilation of Muslim immigrants in the US, and how the issues of race, gender, “trans-nationalism” and stereotypes impact the American Muslim community.

#### **RLG 5516**

#### **Christianity after the New Testament**

**Dr. Kelley**

This course studies Christian thought, institutions, lifestyles, and literature in their social, cultural, and historical contexts from the time of Jesus to the early Middle Ages.