

## UNDERGRADUATE COURSES

Department of Religion  
Florida State University  
Spring 2023

### **HUM 2937    Culture Wars**

**Dr. McVicar**

This course investigates the problem of the so-called “culture wars” in recent U.S. history. The class will focus on studying the historical development of the “culture wars” from the emergence of the concept in the early 1990s, to its contemporary relevance in American political, social, and cultural discourse. The course will introduce students to several major themes in twentieth-century U.S. history that have contributed to contemporary culture wars, including controversial topics related to abortion, LGBTQ rights, race, religion, and immigration. *Prerequisite: admission to the honors program. Liberal Studies Competencies: History, Scholarship in Practice*

### **IDH 3119    Ethics, Religion, Superheroes**

**Dr. Moret**

This course uses superhero mythology as a lens through which to view the historical development of ethical norms in the United States. Students unpack the ideological meanings of these stories while thinking critically about the political, historical, philosophical, psychological, and religious ideas that are reflected in the mythology. Special attention is paid to race, gender, and religion. *Prerequisite: admission to the honors program. Liberal Studies Competencies: Ethics, Diversity.*

### **IDH 3611    Civil Rights and Black Power**

**Dr. Moret**

This course explores the ways that appeals to religious concepts and identities have influenced racial relations and politics in America, with a focus on the legacies of the Civil Rights and Black Power movements. *Prerequisite: admission to the honors program. Liberal Studies Competency: Diversity, Oral Communication.*

### **IDS 2679    Need and Greed**

**Dr. Lane**

This course examines the ethics of money, wealth, and poverty from the perspective of religious communities. *Prerequisite: admission to the honors program. Liberal Studies Competencies: Ethics, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).*

### **REL 1300    Introduction to World Religions**

**Instructors listed below by section:**

**Prof. Durdin (section 01); Mr. Austin (section 02); Ms. Adityan (section 03); Dr. Edwards (sections 04, 14); Prof. Dupuigrenet (sections 05, 12); Mr. Akiti (section 07); Mr. H. Perez (section 08); Ms. Brown (section 09); Mr. Woodward (section 10); Ms. Gordon (section 11); Ms. Butool (section 15)**

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. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity, State-Mandated Writing (“W”). This course is also offered online (section 08).*

**REL 2121 Religion in the United States** **Instructors listed below by section:**  
**Prof. Hazard (section 01); Mr. Anthony (section 02); Mr. W. Perez (section 03); Prof. Corrigan (section 05 [honors-only])**

This course introduces 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 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. *Liberal Studies Competencies: History, Diversity, State-Mandated Writing (“W”). Prerequisite for section 05: admission to the honors program.*

**REL 2210 Introduction to the Old Testament** **Instructors listed below by section:**  
**Mr. Barr (section 01); Dr. Edwards (sections 02, 03)**

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. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).*

**REL 2240 Introduction to the New Testament** **Instructors listed below by section:**  
**Prof. Kelley (section 01); Mr. Henderson (section 02)**

This course introduces students to the writings of the New Testament in the context of the historical development of early Christianity. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).*

**REL 3112 Religion and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fantasy Literature** **Ms. 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. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).*

**REL 3128 Religion, Prisons & Abolition** **Prof. McTighe**

Abolition is both a vision and a practice: it is the vision of a world without prisons, and it is the practice of how we build that world together. In this course, students will work historically and thematically to study the long legacies of criminalization and abolition in the South, and will produce their own original research about the role of religion in building a more just society. *Liberal Studies Competencies: History. May be repeated to a maximum of nine semester hours.*

**REL 3142 Religion, the Self, and Society** **Prof. 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. *Liberal Studies Competency: Humanities & Cultural Practice.*

**REL 3145      Gender and Religion      Instructors listed below by section:**  
**Prof. McTighe (section 01 [honors]); Ms. Burnside & Ms. Lovestone (section 02); Egbeyale (section 03)**

This course is grounded in a core principle of feminist praxis: that theory is generated from everyday life and the ordinary experiences of living gender and religion. We will approach gender and religious through a series of iterative small group projects that move you out of the classroom and into Tallahassee to learn from community leaders. *Liberal Studies Competency: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity, State-Mandated Writing (“W”). Prerequisite for section 01: admission to the honors program.*

**REL 3152      Religion, Race and Ethnicity      Instructors listed below by section:**  
**Ms. Burns (section 01); Mr. Lee (section 02)**

This course examines the relation between race, ethnicity and religious beliefs in a cross-cultural context. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Ethics, Diversity.*

**REL 3170      Religious Ethics & Moral Problems      Instructors listed below by section:**  
**Mr. Aldridge (section 01); Mr. Carpenter (section 02); Mr. Waters (section 03); Dr. Zhang (section 04); Dr. Lane (sections 05, 06, 07)**

This course discusses contemporary moral problems such as deception, sexual activities and relations, war, and the economy from the standpoints of major religious traditions. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Ethics, Diversity, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).*

**REL 3171-01 Who Is Human? What Are Rights?      Prof. Hellweg**

How can we guarantee human well-being and flourishing in a world defined by diverse notions of personhood and social life? We approach the question through historical and cross-cultural cases in which the notion of human “rights” gives way to alternative concepts like the good, the holy, the commons, and virtue itself. We look to the practice of everyday life and to epic narratives, performance styles, ritual practices, and other sources of ethical behavior to ground human dignity either beyond or in tandem with contemporary, global human rights discourse. Students will read multiple sources about these topics while pursuing research of their own. *Liberal Studies Competency: Ethics. Core Course: Human Rights & Social Justice Major.*

**REL 3171-02 Foundations of Human Rights      Prof. Kelsay**

This course deals with the historical, philosophical, and religious foundations of contemporary notions of human rights. We will cover the drafting of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Christian, Muslim, and other religious perspectives on human rights, the role of human rights in U.S. foreign policy, and other topics. *Liberal Studies Competency: Ethics. Core Course: Human Rights & Social Justice Major.*

**REL 3171-03 Islamic Ethics      Mr. 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 democracy and governance, human rights, social justice, pluralism, jihad, gender, sexuality, and death. *Liberal Studies Competency: Ethics.*

**REL 3171-04 Topics in Ethics: Title & Description Forthcoming      Prof. Day**

This course considers themes and problems in modern ethics. The class format will include lecture, discussion, and film. *Liberal Studies Competency: Ethics.*

**REL 3171-05 Religious & Political Ethics in the Middle East & North Africa     Mr. Bursey**

This course introduces students to the complex issues that derive from interactions of religion and political ethics in the domestic and international political arena of the contemporary Middle East and North Africa (MENA). From Arab nationalist movements, to the life and times of the Prophet Mohammad, 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. *Liberal Studies Competency: Ethics.*

**REL 3171-06 Confucian Ethics in Global Context     Dr. Zhang**

This course introduces major themes in Confucian ethics by juxtaposing Confucianism with other moral traditions in the world. After a historical survey, it examines how different forms of Confucianism in East Asia approach the issues of political order, gender, and education in modern society. *Liberal Studies Competency: Ethics.*

**REL 3178     Religion and Law     Dr. Cole**

This course is a survey of how American jurisprudence about the First Amendment has understood religion, attending to the specific legal and ethical arguments made in the U.S. Supreme Court opinions and how they intersect with philosophical accounts of the meaning of freedom. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Ethics, Scholarship in Practice, State-Mandated Writing ("W").*

**REL 3293     Jesus in History and Culture     Prof. Kelley**

This course will survey various understandings of Jesus, both as an historical figure and as a cultural phenomenon. The first half of the course will be devoted to the question of the historical Jesus: we'll read ancient sources about Jesus alongside a variety of scholarly reconstructions of Jesus' life and teachings. The second half of the course will focus on the figure of Jesus in the history of thought and culture. *Liberal Studies Competency: Humanities & Cultural Practice.*

**REL 3340     The Buddhist Tradition     Prof. Cuevas**

This course surveys the Buddhist tradition from its beginnings through the modern period. Some attention to its contemporary forms. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity.*

**REL 3367     Islamic Traditions II: Islam up to the Modern World     Prof. Gaiser**

This course examines Islam and its adherents from 1300 CE to the present, concentrating on the last two centuries of Islamic history: the period of reform, renewal, and revolution in the wake of Western political and cultural domination. This course investigates a basic question: What happened to different Muslim communities and intellectuals (specifically those in the Arab world, Iran, Turkey, and Africa) as they responded to the challenges posted by "Westernization" and "modernization?" Moreover, it explores the relatively new phenomenon of Islam in America. *Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity.*

**REL 3431     Critics of Religion (Honors)     Prof. Kavka**

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 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”). Prerequisite: admission to the honors program.***

**REL 3484 New Religious Movements****Prof. McVicar**

This course investigates the role of new religious movements (NRMs) in American culture and history. ***Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity, Upper Division Writing.***

**REL 3505 Christian Tradition****Prof. Dupuigrenet**

This course explores Christianity from its origins and growth in the Mediterranean world, through the Reformations, and into the present day. Students will gain a panoramic view of global Christianities and the ability to apply a range of approaches in studying its growth and diversification. This will facilitate a wide discussion of its contents, context, and contemporary implications. ***Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, State-Mandated Writing (“W”).***

**REL 3935 Topics in Buddhism: Buddhist Meditation****Prof. 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. ***Liberal Studies Competencies: Humanities & Cultural Practice, Diversity. May be repeated to a maximum of nine semester hours. May be repeated within the same semester.***

**REL 3936 Special Topics: Religion: Levantine Religious Minorities****Dr. Najm**

This course, on a mosaic of religions and sects from the late Ottoman Era until the present day, is designed to provide an analysis of the concepts of “minority” in the Middle East and to explore various problems related to the study of minorities in the region. It offers a general introduction to minorities in the Middle East and North Africa region, sheds light on the native inhabitants and their diversity, and critically investigates majority-minority interactions and issues. ***Liberal Studies Competency: Humanities & Cultural Practice.***

**REL 4044 What Is Religion? What Is Religious Studies?****Prof. Hazard**

This course is a survey of how theorists in the modern era have answered questions about the original essence, and function of religion, as well as an examination of the methods by which religion is studied in a scholarly environment. ***Liberal Studies Competencies: Scholarship in Practice, Oral Communication, Upper Division Writing.***

**REL 4190 Researching Religion: Qualitative Inquiry****Prof. Hellweg**

Studying religion requires engaging with religious texts, practices, and practitioners in ways that defy scientific “objectivity.” Does that make religious studies merely “subjective?” In response to this question, you will explore – and try your hand at – various methods for collecting evidence to make compelling arguments about religious life. Our field site will be Tallahassee and its various religious communities, libraries, and archives. In addition to archival and library research, you will learn to do participant observation, informal and semi-structured interviews, focus groups, free lists, and other forms of ethnographic inquiry to complete a small, original research project, as well as grant proposal, on a topic of your choice.

**REL 4203 Readings in Classical Hebrew Texts****Prof. Goff**

This course consists of intensive work on specific religious texts in classical Hebrew (ancient or medieval). Choice of texts will vary. *Prerequisite: HEB2230 or instructor's permission. May be repeated to a maximum of twelve semester hours.*

**REL 4304 Daoism****Prof. Yu**

This course is a graduate seminar on Daoism, open also to upper-level undergraduate students. This seminar examines important or recent scholarly studies on the histories, doctrines, and rituals of medieval Daoism and popular religions. The focus is primarily on the intersection of cultic traditions and Chinese culture, with special attention to several themes: Chinese gods and the problem of unity vs. diversity; patterns of authority in Daoism, priesthood, and ritual salvation.

**REL 4359 Special Topics in Asian Religions: Tantric Buddhism****Prof. Cuevas**

This seminar examines the historical development of Tantra and Esoteric Buddhism (Mantranaya, Vajrayana) in early medieval India (c. 500-1200 C.E.), with some attention to the spread and practice of Tantric/Esoteric traditions in Nepal, Tibet, China, and Japan. Topics covered include origins and history of the Tantric movement, esoteric literature, sacred biography, magic and ritual, yoga and meditation, and Tantra and politics. The course will also assess the varied scholarly interpretations and popular representations of Tantric/Esoteric Buddhism over the last century in Europe, the United States, and Asia. The course will run on a seminar format with active and in-depth discussion of readings and intensive individual writing projects.

**REL 4491 Undergraduate Seminar on Religious Thought: Martyrdom****Prof. Kelsay**

Intended for advanced undergraduate students. The idea of martyrdom in the sense of sacrificing one's life in the service of bearing witness to ultimate values has a deep history in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In this course, attention will be paid to all three traditions, though there will be a special interest in historic and contemporary Islam. Toward the end of the class, we will also consider whether the concept of martyrdom applies in the case of nationalistic struggles, so that the issue will be whether the notion of a martyr and of a patriot are similar concepts. *Prerequisite: instructor's permission. May be repeated to a maximum of nine semester hours.*

**REL 4905 Directed Individual Study****REL 4932 Honors Work in Religion**

**GRADUATE COURSES**  
**Department of Religion**  
**Florida State University**  
**Spring 2023**

**RLG5030 Religion In the Classroom**

**Prof. Durdin**

This course trains graduate students in the Department of Religion to be effective teaching assistants' and instructors. It addresses three areas that are relevant to the teaching of religion: the logistics, design, and execution of courses. As such, it introduces students to a range of pedagogical issues surrounding the teaching of religion at academic institutions.

**RLG5195-1 Research Methods for Students of Religion**

**Prof. Hellweg**

This course explores qualitative research methods in religious studies, including archival and ethnographic work (interviews, participant observation, etc.). Students will do original, small research projects in the service of their own interests, and applications from granting agencies.

**RLG5195-2 Historiography of American Religion**

**Prof. Corrigan**

A seminar that explores book-length histories of religion in America, written by a wide assortment of scholars, that have been published over the past two centuries, with particular emphasis on scholarship of the last forty years. We will meet weekly to discuss the reading, which students will take turns presenting to the seminar.

**RLG5204 Classical Hebrew Texts**

**Prof. Goff**

This course consists of intensive work on specific religious texts in classical Hebrew (ancient or medieval). Choice of texts varies.

**RLG5305-1 Daoist Traditions, Past and Present**

**Prof. Yu**

This seminar examines important or recently scholarly studies on the histories, doctrines, and rituals of medieval Daoism and popular religions. The focus is primarily on the intersection of cultic traditions and Chinese culture, with special attention to several themes: Chinese gods and the problem of unity vs. diversity; patterns of authority in Daoism; priesthood; and ritual salvation.

**RLG5305-2 Islamic Law and Society**

**Prof. Gaiser and Prof. Hanley**

This course examines the development of Islamic law and legal cultures as they impact and are shaped by the various contexts in which they operate. Focusing especially on the intersections between Islamic law and Islamic societies, the course presents students with some of the most recent scholarship on the origins and evolution of Islamic law, its manifestations in the medieval period, and its interpretations in the modern era. The course uses primary sources in conjunction with source-critical secondary literature to explore contemporary scholarly debates surrounding Islamic law, its interpreters and its social contexts.

**RLG5354-1 Tantric Buddhism****Prof. Cuevas**

This seminar examines the historical development of Tantra and Esoteric Buddhism (Mantranaya, Vajrayāna) in early medieval India, c. 500–1200CE, with some attention to the spread and practice of Tantric/Esoteric traditions in Nepal, Tibet, China, and Japan. Topics covered include the origins and history of the Tantric movement, esoteric literature, sacred biography, magic and ritual, yoga and meditation, and Tantra and politics. The course will also assess the various scholarly interpretations and popular representations of Tantric/Esoteric Buddhism over the last century in Europe, the United States and Asia. The course will run in a seminar format, with active and in-depth discussion of readings and intensive individual writing projects.

**RLG5497-1 Martyrdom****Prof. Kelsay**

The idea of martyrdom, in the sense of sacrificing one's life in the service of bearing witness to ultimate values, has a deep history in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. In this course, attention will be paid to all three traditions, though there will be a special interest in historic and contemporary Islam. Toward the end of the class, we will also consider whether the concept of martyrdom applies in the case of nationalistic struggles, so that the issue will be whether the notion of a martyr and of a patriot are similar concepts.

**RLG5921 Departmental Colloquium**

**Prof. Kelsay (5921-01); Prof. Corrigan (5921-02); Prof. Hellweg (5921-03);  
Prof. Goff (5921-04)**

A departmental colloquium for the presentation and discussion of student, faculty, and visitor work-in-progress. *This is a zero-credit-hour course; students should enroll in the section appropriate to their track.*

**RLG5971 Master's Thesis****RLG6298-1 Hebrew Bible Proseminar****Prof. Goff**

This class is a graduate seminar that will examine fundamental issues in the study of the Hebrew Bible. Topics that will be addressed include the history of scholarship, leading critical approaches, and major topics of debate in the field. The foundational questions addressed by the course are "What was biblical studies? What is biblical studies? What should biblical studies be?" This course is required for graduate students in the RWA track, and is not open to students in other tracks of the department's graduate program without instructor permission.

**RLG6904 Readings for Exams****RLG6980 Dissertation****RLG8964 Doctoral Exams****RLG8976 Master's Thesis Defense****RLG8985 Dissertation Defense**