



## INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION

**REL-R 133 TR 11:15A-12:30P**

**PROF. PATRICK MICHELSON**

**CREDITS** GENED A&H CASE A&H

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What is religion? Where does it come from? What does it do? How should we study it? This course introduces students to the many different ways that theorists and scholars of religion have tried to answer these questions, as well as the ways in which these questions became questions at all. Students will learn that our understanding of religion and the meanings we give to that term are largely founded upon competing claims about the existence of God, differing values that have been assigned to religion, and conflicting interpretations about religion's role in shaping culture, politics, society, and the self.

God

self

fear

love

death

psychology

sociology

## RELIGIONS OF ASIA

**REL-R 153 TR 11:15A-12:05P** + DISCUSSION **PROF. DAVID HABERMAN**

**CREDITS** GENED A&H GENED WCC CASE GCC CASE A&H

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Why does the god Ganesh have the head of an elephant? Why did the Buddha leave the luxury of the palace? What did Confucius really say? What's so good about a worthless tree? Come find the answers to these and many other questions. This course is designed as an introduction to the major religious traditions of Asia, with special attention to Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. While examining the historical context of each tradition, we will explore a wide range of worldviews and the variety of ways of being religious that comprise Asian religions. Issues to be explored include differing perceptions of the natural world, various understandings of the human predicament, concepts of self and human nature, and proposals for the goal of a religious life and ways of achieving it.

love

poetry

death

yoga

devotion

blessings

## INTRODUCTION TO RELIGION IN AMERICA

**REL-R 160 MW 2:30-3:20P** + DISCUSSION PROF. COOPER HARRISS

**CREDITS** GENED A&H CASE GCC CASE A&H

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What is “religious”? Who are “Americans”? We know to look for religion in churches, synagogues, or mosques, but what about ballparks, kitchens, battlefields, or automobiles? Religion is seen as a public “good,” but can it be “bad”? We often assume that “America” means the US, but what of the borders that people cross and defend from Brazil to Canada? What of networks and practices that span the Atlantic (the slave trade or common law) or the Pacific (yoga or surfing)? This course blends the familiar with the strange, exploring things we might expect (Native spirituality, the Great Awakening, the Scopes “Monkey” Trial) and others that are sure to surprise (vegetarianism, spaceships, lacrosse).

religion

America

culture

law

history

society

## RELIGION, ETHICS, AND PUBLIC LIFE

**REL-R 170 MW 10:10-11:00A** + DISCUSSION PROF. LISA SIDERIS

**CREDITS** GENED A&H CASE A&H

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The world is aflame. It is a contest pitting us against them, human against animal, consumption against conservation, today against tomorrow. This course introduces students to religious and ethical issues related to these conflicts and how they shape our individual lives, American society, and the world at large. We will examine issues related to medicine and technology, especially those that seek to enhance and transform the human; the use of technologies in animals and agriculture; the consequences of climate change, geo-engineering, and energy depletion; as well as land use and food ethics. Students will become familiar with ethical argumentation and the ways in which religions contribute to ethical decision-making and activism around the globe. In other words, we will learn how to think and talk about some of the most pressing issues facing our earthly existence.

human

animal

energy

technology

medicine

environment

## INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

**REL-B 210 MW 1:00-2:15P**

PROF. RICHARD NANCE

**CREDITS** GENED A&H GENED WCC CASE GCC CASE A&H

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This course surveys the development of Buddhism, from its origins in India to its subsequent expansion across the globe, including its presence in the United States. We will pursue two main goals: 1) to gain familiarity with the basic ideas and practices of Buddhism as they have developed in various historical and cultural settings, and 2) to think critically about these ideas and practices and what they imply for those who espouse and engage in them. Course requirements include open-book writing assignments and closed-book exams.

mindfulness

Zen

meditation

Dharma

nirvana

## INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT

**REL-A 220 MW 1:25-2:15P** + DISCUSSION

PROF. JEREMY SCHOTT

**CREDITS** GENED A&H GENED WCC CASE GCC CASE A&H

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This course introduces students to the New Testament, a fascinating collection of tales, poems, letters, and apocalyptic visions. Our aim is to understand how these texts radically transformed Eastern and Western cultures and worldviews and how they still permeate our contemporary life and thinking. Students will walk away from this class with a basic knowledge of all the major texts of the New Testament and with a new understanding of the transformative potential of religious practices and ideas.

religion

Jesus

literature

antiquity

Christianity

## INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

**REL-A 250 MW 9:30-10:45A**

PROF. CANDY BROWN

**CREDITS** GENED A&H GENED WCC CASE GCC CASE A&H

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This course will teach you new things about a familiar religion. We will trace the surprisingly varied, often controversial, history of Christianity from Jesus and his followers' healings and exorcisms in the first century up through the global expansion of Christianity in the modern world. More broadly, we will gain an understanding of the diversity of world cultures, both within the U.S. and around the globe, and we will gain skills in interacting with human diversity in culturally informed and sensitive ways.

religion

globalization

world cultures

healing

exorcism

## THE BIBLE & ETHICS: LOVE, POVERTY & WAR

**REL-A 300 TR 2:30-3:45P**

PROF. LAURA CARLSON HASLER

**CREDITS** CASE A&H

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This course explores the diverse ethics about love and sex, economics, and violence expressed in the literature of the Hebrew Bible, the Septuagint, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. In each unit, we will read texts from a range of genres and contexts, and will pose questions about how power and vulnerability are depicted in each case. We will ask: Who is protected and empowered in these texts? Who is forgotten? What anxieties and hopes might underlie these narratives and laws? How do we make sense of conflicting values depicted within and across these documents? Students will be asked to debate and answer questions throughout the course as we grapple with the complex task of parsing, resisting, or welcoming ethical transformation by means of ancient texts.

sex

sexuality

gender

violence

economics

war

poverty

## RACE, RELIGION, AND DEMOCRACY

REL-C 300 MW 1:00-2:15P

PROF. J. KAMERON CARTER

CREDITS CASE A&H

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This course thinks about U.S. society as a simultaneous racial, religious, and political formation. Special attention will be given to “Whiteness” as the crux of American society and as operating as “religion” where religion is to be understood as a mode of social organization. Driving “American religion” as American culture as American race are such ideals as democracy, freedom, citizenship, and equality before the law. We will draw on artists, writers, and poets to get at alternative understandings of “America,” “religion,” and “democracy” beyond the racial imagination’s grip.

whiteness

society

freedom

equality

law

## NATURE SPIRITUALITY

REL-D 300 MW 4:00-5:15P

PROF. LISA SIDERIS

CREDITS CASE A&H

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Does the human connection to nature constitute a form of religion? Are outdoor activities like hiking, running, climbing, and surfing, a form of spiritual practice? What are the consequences, positive and negative, of framing environmentalism as a form of religious commitment? As humans increasingly engage with artificial environments and technology, what are the social and psychological impacts? Through a variety of lenses, including nature writing, pagan practices, studies of awe and wonder, indigenous and animistic perspectives, and the reflections of scientists and religion scholars, we will consider the variety of ways in which humans engage spiritually with nature and nonhumans. Requirements include short papers, outdoor field activities, and in-class presentations.

spirituality

science

eco-psychology

outdoor activities

wonder

## EAST ASIAN BUDDHISM

REL-B 310 TR 11:15A-12:30P

PROF. HEATHER BLAIR

CREDITS  CASE GCC  CASE A&H

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This discussion-oriented course introduces students to Buddhism in China, Korea, Japan, and the East Asian diaspora. We begin with an introduction to basic Buddhist teachings about how reality works and how we should navigate that reality. From there, we move into four thematic units. First, we examine the Buddhist multiverse and the creatures inhabiting it, from the heavens down to the hells. Then we explore the monastery as a site for dedicated practice by religious specialists (mostly, but not exclusively, monks and nuns). Next we look at how rulers have used Buddhism for political purposes. Finally, we study pilgrimage, which brings people from all walks of life together in sacred places. Course materials cover a broad historical range and draw from multiple genres, from scripture to poetry to film.

heaven

hell

pilgrimage

devotion

practice

politics

## RACE, RELIGION & ETHNICITY IN THE AMERICAS

REL-C 325 TR 3:35-6:05P (1<sup>ST</sup> 8 WEEKS) PROF. STEPHEN SELKA

CREDITS  CASE DIV  CASE S&H

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Our starting point in the course is the idea that religion, race, and ethnicity are not given or stable categories, but concepts that change over time, vary across contexts, and are often constructed in relation to one another. We explore this idea across the Americas with a focus on African American and African Diaspora religions. Themes we examine include religion, race, and colonialism; religion and the construction of whiteness and blackness; religion, race, and nationalism; and religion and race in transnational perspective. Coursework will include weekly reading responses and two essay exams.

colonialism

diaspora

nationalism

transnationalism

## WOMEN & GENDER IN SOUTH ASIAN RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

REL-B 330 TR 11:15A-12:30P

PROF. REBECCA MANRING

CREDITS CASE A&H

Do Hindu women in Indiana practice their religion the same ways their grandmothers back in India do/did? How do modern women understand their lives, duties, and responsibilities in light of a religion that goes back thousands of years? And what's with all those goddesses? Using primary texts, first-person accounts, films and novels, and in-class discussions, students will take turns leading discussions as we explore Hindu women's religious lives. They will write six short essays and one longer research paper over the course of the semester, and make short presentations about their research.

Hindu

goddesses

duty

India

responsibility

religious practice

## DISASTER IN AMERICAN RELIGION & CULTURE

REL-C 345 MW 11:15A-12:30P

PROF. COOPER HARRISS

CREDITS CASE DIV CASE A&H

Disasters lead to questions. "Why?" "How?" Even "where is God in the midst of all this?" People often turn to artistic expression in the attempt to find answers for these questions. This course focuses on four American disasters and the artistic production they have spawned (Titanic movies, the 1927 flood and blues music, Indian eradication and the Ghost Dance, and 9/11 graphic novels) to think about how these cultural forms attempt to provide order in chaos, seeking to find answers for what is essentially unanswerable about suffering as a human experience.

religion

theodicy

Titanic

Native American

the Blues

9/11



## CLASSICAL CHINESE THOUGHT

REL-B 374 TR 4:00-5:15P

PROF. AARON STALNAKER

CREDITS CASE GCC CASE A&H

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This course provides an introduction to the early development of Chinese thought, from the oracle bone divination of the Shang Dynasty to the religious, ethical, and political theories of classical Confucianism, Mohism, and Daoism, through the unification of China in 221 BCE. We will concentrate on early debates over human nature and the best practices of self-cultivation, the general nature of the cosmos and the human role in it, and the proper ordering of society. The different positions articulated by these early Chinese figures greatly influenced later Chinese intellectual and social history, including the development of Buddhism, and influenced developments in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam as well. Readings are in English translation.

nature

ethics

yin/yang

vital energy

ritual

politics

## CRISIS AND CRITIQUE

REL-R 389 TR 1:00-2:15P

PROF. PATRICK MICHELSON

CREDITS GENED A&H CASE A&H

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What is religion's relationship to crisis and critique? Is religion the source of or an expression of crisis and, thus, in need of critique itself? Does religion reveal the fact that humans are in crisis, providing us with terms, concepts, and narratives to critique our crisis? And how might the very notions of crisis and critique be grounded in or essential to religion? This seminar addresses these and other questions about religion, crisis, and critique through a close reading of selected religious texts and accompanying scholarship. Class meetings are organized around student-led discussions. Grades are determined by written assignments and classroom participation.

alienation

prophecy

anxiety

redemption

apocalypse

revolution

## GENDER, SEX, BODIES, AND RELIGION

REL-D 399 TR 4:00-5:15 P

PROF. HEATHER BLAIR

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How does the fact that we have and in fact are bodies relate to how we do religion? How do religious beliefs and practices shape our bodies and our constructions of gender? What are our bodies for? This discussion-intensive course encourages students to develop their own answers to these and related questions through analytical engagement with a wide range of source materials. For example, we'll explore how race and religion tangle with each other in contemporary American visual art. And we'll compare ancient Buddhist and Christian sex-change narratives to chart differences in the gendered qualities of enlightenment and salvation. Plus, we'll explore what the cultural history of Chinese foot-binding might have in common with Lady Gaga's popular appeal. Course requirements include regular participation in class discussion, several short writing assignments, and a final research project.

embodiment

fashion

art

race

scripture

popular culture

## RELIGION, ILLNESS, AND HEALING

REL-C 402 MW 11:15A-12:30P

PROF. CANDY BROWN

CREDITS CASE A&H CASE DUS CASE IW

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Is religion good—or bad—for your health? How should healthcare providers respond to religious beliefs of patients? What ethical and legal questions arise when spiritual healing is integrated with (or replaces) conventional healthcare, or is taught in public schools? Topics include: yoga, mindfulness, Transcendental Meditation, acupuncture, chiropractic, Reiki, pentecostal divine healing, Jehovah's Witnesses' refusal of blood transfusions, and ethics in end-of-life care.

yoga

meditation

acupuncture

mindfulness

hospice

## BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY IN INDIA

REL-B 414 MW 9:30-10:45A

PROF. RICHARD NANCE

CREDITS  CASE GCC  CASE A&H  CASE IW

This course surveys the historical development of Buddhist philosophy in India. We will begin by briefly reviewing some of the basic contours of early Indian Buddhist philosophical reflection. Following this review, we will read and discuss several texts by thinkers of seminal importance to Buddhist tradition, focusing on how these thinkers posed and attempted to answer questions regarding the self, reality, reasoning, knowledge, belief, conduct, and liberation.

emptiness

wisdom

Nagarjuna

Vasubandhu

mind-only

epistemology

## EXPLORING THE BHAGAVAD GITA

REL-B 420 MW 2:30-3:45P

PROF. DAVID HABERMAN

CREDITS  CASE A&H

The Bhagavad Gita is sometimes referred to today as the “Bible” of Hinduism. This text has been favored by many Hindus (it was Gandhi’s favorite text), as well as many non-Hindus. Almost every major Hindu thinker has written a commentary on the Bhagavad Gita. This text, however, was composed in a specific cultural context and expresses a very particular religious philosophy. This seminar involves a close reading and deep exploration of the Bhagavad Gita, examining it for both universal themes and distinctive cultural expressions. It also aims to teach students to generate and pursue textual questions, thereby empowering productive readings of religious texts. We will read and discuss every verse of the text in seminar format.

Hindu

scripture

joyful devotion

enlightenment

Krishna

## CONTEMPORARY STUDY OF ISLAM

REL-A 470 TR 4:00-5:15P

PROF. NUR AMALI IBRAHIM

CREDITS CASE GCC CASE A&H

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Utilizing the critical lenses of anthropology and ethnography, this course examines the ways that Islam influences culture and society in the contemporary world. We will draw upon scholarship of different social contexts, from the Middle East to Southeast Asia and the Western world, to investigate the contributions made by Islam in fields as diverse as art and aesthetic production, finance and banking, organ transplantation and other medical procedures, law and politics, resource extraction and environmental protection, and expressions of gender identity and sexual preferences. Students will acquire some familiarity with critical concepts such as tradition, self-cultivation, embodiment, everyday religion, and global assemblages.

Islam

anthropology

ethnography

the modern world

## KNOWING THE WILL OF GOD IN ISLAM: THEOLOGY

REL-A 480 MW 11:15A-12:30P

PROF. KEVIN JAQUES

CREDITS CASE GCC CASE A&H

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Knowing the Will of God in the Islamic tradition is one of its most important theological and legal issues. How is it that Muslims know what God wants them to do? What are the implications of getting it wrong? And, what happens if you get it right? The course will examine issues such as 1) the nature and scope of revelation, 2) the nature of good and evil, and 3) free will vs. predestination. The course will also explore Muslim views of creation, cosmology (the nature of God, angels, jinn, demons, and Satan, life after death, especially the issue of martyrdom), and eschatology (the end times). Course Requirements: there will be weekly one page essays that discuss the readings, one midterm take-home essay, and a final written research paper that explores of the topics discussed during the class (12-15 pages).

good

evil

angels

demons

predestination

revelation

freewill

## CONCEPTS OF SELF: EAST & WEST

**COLL-C 103 TR 12:20-1:10P** + DISCUSSION PROF. AARON STALNAKER

**CREDITS**  GENED A&H  CASE A&H  CAPP

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Different cultures offer different visions of human life. But what are we to make of this diversity? Do we have any rational basis for evaluating the alternative possibilities for life presented by different religious and philosophical traditions? This course examines statements on the nature of human existence from both East Asia and the ancient and modern West, with a special focus on Christianity, Confucianism, and Daoism. Recurring issues in this course include the relationship between reason and emotion, as well as between our more animal and more human sides; problems in life that deform the self; the need, if any, for gods or the transcendent to actualize the self; various practices of self-cultivation; and the relation of individual and communal flourishing. All readings are in English or English translation.

self  God  emotion  happiness  love  virtue

## ORIGINAL SIN: RELIGION, PSYCHOLOGY & BEHAVIOR

**COLL-C 103 MW 12:20-1:10P** + DISCUSSION PROF. CONSTANCE FUREY

**CREDITS**  GENED A&H  CASE A&H  CAPP

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Are we born bad? Selfish and greedy? Do we have a difficult time understanding why we do what we do? Of acting on behalf of others rather than ourselves? Are humans rational creatures? Or are we driven by emotions and desires that we often only dimly understand? These are questions you might encounter in a psychology class. They are some of the questions that neuroscientists and other empirical sciences seek to answer. But they are also the questions addressed by the religious doctrine of original sin, in some of the most formative and influential texts ever written. In this class we'll demonstrate the enduring relevance of religious texts to contemporary questions of human psychology.

free will  gender  oppression  salvation  predestination  activism

## DEATH

**COLL-C 103 MW 1:25-2:15P** + DISCUSSION

PROF. KEVIN JAQUES

**CREDITS**  GENED A&H  CASE A&H  CAPP

This course will explore several issues under the broad topic of 'death.' We will study various cultural responses to personal death (i.e., one's own death), the death of others, and the loss of other meaningful things. In this class, we will ask: how have people thought about death? How do people cope with personal death anxiety? How have various cultures dealt with the grief associated with losing someone or something significant? In thinking through these questions we will read the work of contemporary philosophers, anthropologists, and scholars of religious studies. This will involve learning about early China, futuristic Japan, and contemporary Europe and the United States. Students will explore the role of mourning across cultures, analyze various approaches to coping with anxieties associated with death, and think through the ways in which death might influence how people live.

grief

resilience

hope

loss

fear

## HIP-HOP RELIGION

**COLL-C 103 MW 3:35-4:25P** + DISCUSSION PROF. J. KAMERON CARTER

**CREDITS**  GENED A&H  CASE A&H  CAPP

Kendrick Lamar. Lemonade. Jay-Z. Black Messiah. Janalle Monae. We know these names and titles from playlists, videos, and Instagram. They shape our politics, our fashion, our style, and our attitudes. But they also open up questions of the sacred, perhaps even the possibility of the sacred itself. By engaging hip-hop culture, as well as its deeper history in spirituals, gospel, and R&B, this course introduces students to the critical study of religion and culture.

Hip-Hop

Blackness

black religion

sound + the sacred

black theology

# THE BIBLE AND EMPIRE

**JSTU-J 203 TR 9:30-10:45A** PROF. LAURA CARLSON HASLER

**CREDITS** GENED A&H CASE A&H

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This course examines several books in the Hebrew Bible that are set in the midst of empire. The course will proceed by conducting close readings of these narratives with special attention to the dynamics of imperial encounter within them. The approach of the course will be largely literary, but it will also address historical and compositional factors. The major questions of the course will be: What are the many (and, at times, conflicting) ways these Bible stories represent imperial power? What theologies of religious and political power are discernable in these texts? What strategies of compliance, collusion, and resistance are privileged and disparaged? Together, our aim will be to articulate and grapple with the challenges and complexities of reading biblical literature forged in the shadow of empire and to form our own methods of interpreting such literature today.

colonial

ethics

power

Torah

postcolonial

resistance

# BECOME A RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR <sup>OR</sup> MINOR

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A MAJOR DEGREE

- A minimum of 30 credits in Religious Studies.
- At least one upper-level course in each of the following areas:
  - A: Africa, Europe, and West Asia
  - B: South and East Asia
  - C: The Americas
  - D: Theory, Ethics, Comparison
- Majors Seminar in Religion.
- At least four additional courses at or above the 300 level.
- At least one more course at the 400 level.
- A maximum of two 100-level courses.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR A MINOR DEGREE

- A minimum of 15 credit hours in Religious Studies.
- At least one upper-level course from three of the following four areas:
  - A: Africa, Europe, and West Asia
  - B: South and East Asia
  - C: The Americas
  - D: Theory, Ethics, Comparison
- At least three courses must be at or above the 300 level.
- No more than two 100-level courses.
- Critical Approaches courses taught by Religious Studies faculty can be counted in the minor.

Please refer to the Undergraduate Bulletin for more course details.

To become a Religious Studies major or minor, contact our undergraduate advisor, Aaron Ellis, at [reladv@iu.edu](mailto:reladv@iu.edu).

## COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES BLOOMINGTON

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Course listings are subject to change. Please check on Student Information System (SIS) or the Schedule of Classes website for updated dates and times. We have a very dedicated teaching faculty and an active student organization. More information can be found at [religiousstudies.indiana.edu](http://religiousstudies.indiana.edu)

