About the Religious Studies MA Program

The master's program in religious studies at the University of Missouri is a two-year stand-alone graduate program in the academic study of religion. Many of the program's alumni have gone on to PhD programs in religious studies or related disciplines, while others have completed the master's degree in order to enrich their educational lives or to prepare for work in journalism, education, law, or other fields that demand critical thinking and analytical skills.

The master's program offers training in the academic study of religion, with particular emphasis on theory and methods in religious studies. Students work closely with their advisors and mentors in order to develop and grow as scholars of the discipline. The department offers courses in the areas of Biblical Studies, History of Christianity, Religion in America, Islam, Judaism, Indigenous Religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Women and Religion, and Religion and Neuroscience.

Students must complete a total of 30 credit hours at the graduate level, pass comprehensive exams in theory and methods in the academic study of religion, and complete a Master's thesis or portfolio.

REL_ST 1100: Introduction to Religion
Engages students in reflection on the religious questions that human existence poses, and introduces them to conceptual tools for understanding and evaluating answers which have emerged in human history.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Sections are restricted to Freshmen and Sophomores only or Juniors and Seniors only

REL_ST 1100H: Introduction to Religion - Honors
Engages students in reflection on the religious questions that human existence poses, and introduces them to conceptual tools for understanding and evaluating answers which have emerged in human history.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Sections are restricted to Freshmen and Sophomores only or Juniors and Seniors only. Honors eligibility required

REL_ST 1500: Religion and Culture
The study of religion as expressed in art, literature, music, dance, drama, architecture.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Restricted to Freshmen and Sophomores only

REL_ST 1820: Asian Humanities
(same as AR_H_A 1230, HIST 1820, and S_A_ST 1152). This course is an introduction to the literature and visual arts of Asia through selected master works. It focuses principally on India and China and investigates the distinctive features of their cultures.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 1820H: Asian Humanities - Honors
(same as AR_H_A 1230, HIST 1820, S_A_ST 1152). This course is an introduction to the literature and visual arts of Asia through selected master works. It focuses principally on India and China and investigates the distinctive features of their cultures.

Credit Hours: 3
has historically been approached in the Western world and familiarizes us with different types of death (natural death, death by execution, death from illness, and death by murder). Using a religious studies and American studies approach we will examine overarching themes of grief, loss, mourning, and even anger in association with death and dying.

Credit Hour: 1-3

REL_ST 2230: Religion and Popular Culture in the U.S.
Explores intersections of religion and popular culture and methods for analysis.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2240: Harry Potter, Magic, and Religion
This course explores religious themes in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Topics include ancient Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Norse mythological themes, the relationship between religion and magic, and reactions to the books among various religious groups.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2240H: Harry Potter, Magic, and Religion - Honors
This course explores religious themes in J.K. Rowling's Harry Potter series. Topics include ancient Greek, Roman, Celtic, and Norse mythological themes, the relationship between religion and magic, and reactions to the books among various religious groups. Graded on A-F basis only.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2250: Religious Perspectives on Peace and War
This course explores religious justification for war as well as religious perspectives on peacemaking. We engage these issues through the investigation of a variety of religious leaders and traditions, drawing from contemporary and historical examples. Traditions studied can include Jewish, Christians, Buddhist, Hindu, Islamic, and indigenous illustrations.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2260: Gods, Dwarves, and Dragons: Introduction to Old Norse Mythology
This course is an introduction to the pre-Christian religion and mythology of Northern Europe. Topics covered include Old Norse society, gender roles, and values. Main deities and mythological figures are explored through images and texts. Graded on A-F basis only.

Credit Hours: 2

REL_ST 2270: Religion and Literature
This course explores religious themes such as myth, rituals and rites, sacred power, transcendence, salvation, and pilgrimage in secular literature. Selections in English, include novels and short stories from a variety of cultures and religious traditions.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2270H: Modern Literature and the Quest for Values - Honors
This course is an interdisciplinary study of the religious and ethical questions, quests, and solutions in the literary works of selected modern

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

REL_ST 2280: Biblical Themes in American Literature
This course is a study of the reinterpretation of Hebrew scriptures and New Testament sources in classic American texts. The works of Melville, Faulkner, MacLeish, Baldwin, O'Connor, Updike, Percy, and Morrison create a history of American ideas as they transform traditional biblical figures and ideas.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2280H: Biblical Themes in American Literature - Honors
A study of the sources in the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament and their reinterpretation in classic American texts. Such a study, initially textual, results in a history of American ideas. Authors studied include MacLeish, Baldwin, O'Connor, Updike, Percy and Morrison.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

REL_ST 2310: Religions of China and Japan
Introduction to the religions of East Asia, focusing on both popular beliefs and institutionalized religion. Topics include: Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist traditions of China; Buddhism and Shinto in Japan; self-cultivation practices; spirit mediumship; ritual; cosmology; religion and society; religion and the state.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2310H: Religions of China and Japan - Honors
Introduction to the religions of East Asia, focusing on both popular beliefs and institutionalized religion. Topics include: Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist traditions of China; Buddhism and Shinto in Japan; self-cultivation practices; spirit mediumship; ritual; cosmology; religion and society; religion and the state.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

REL_ST 2410: Essential Stories and Ideas of the Torah
Students will examine major narratives and texts from the Pentateuch section of the Hebrew Bible. This class will present such ancient, medieval, and contemporary interpretations that will demonstrate how biblical texts could be construed in more than one way.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2420: Jewish Ethics
The study and discussion of selected traditional and modern Jewish ethics (e.g., anger, fair speech, gratitude, charity, the animal world) that derive from ancient sources such as the Hebrew Bible, the Talmud, Rabbinic commentaries and contemporary resources.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2450: The Holocaust and Reflections on Genocide
Examines the nature of genocide as an historical phenomenon using the Holocaust as the primary case study.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2450H: The Holocaust and Reflections on Genocide - Honors
An introduction to the literature of the Hebrew Bible in its Ancient Near Eastern cultural context. Students are exposed to the art, archaeology, literature, and histories of the great civilizations of the ANE and their impact on Israelite history and the formation of the Hebrew Bible. Emphasis is placed on the development and changes in Israelite theology in response to historical circumstances over the centuries that witnessed the Hebrew Bible's composition, compilation, and canonization.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2500: Introduction to the Hebrew Bible and its World
An introduction to the books of the New Testament and the methods and principles guiding its academic study. Emphasis is placed on Jesus' and his disciples' Jewish heritage and the relationship and interactions between Judaism and Christianity over the decades the NT books were written and compiled. Attention is given to the character of the Roman world in which Christianity grew and found the bulk of its converts. Finally, stress is given to the texts that were not accepted into the canonical NT, the Christians whose views those texts represent, and their differences from those Christians whose views became orthodox.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2510: Introduction to the New Testament and its World
An introduction to the books of the New Testament and the methods and principles guiding its academic study. Emphasis is placed on Jesus' and his disciples' Jewish heritage and the relationship and interactions between Judaism and Christianity over the decades the NT books were written and compiled. Attention is given to the character of the Roman world in which Christianity grew and found the bulk of its converts. Finally, stress is given to the texts that were not accepted into the canonical NT, the Christians whose views those texts represent, and their differences from those Christians whose views became orthodox.

Credit Hours: 3

An introduction to the books of the New Testament and the methods and principles guiding its academic study. Emphasis is placed on Jesus' and his disciples' Jewish heritage and the relationship and interactions between Judaism and Christianity over the decades the NT books were written and compiled. Attention is given to the character of the Roman world in which Christianity grew and found the bulk of its converts. Finally, stress is given to the texts that were not accepted into the canonical NT, the Christians whose views those texts represent, and their differences from those Christians whose views became orthodox.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 2600: Early Christianity
(same as HIST 2600). History of Christian practices and teachings from Christian origins through the 8th century, including Eastern Orthodox Syrian Christianity, Roman Catholicism. Themes such as interpretation
and creation of Scriptures, worship style, central rituals, debates about right teaching (orthodoxy) mysticism and developing lifestyles both in and apart from the world.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2600H: Early Christianity - Honors**
History of Christian practices and teachings from Christian origins through the 8th century, including Eastern Orthodoxy Syrian Christianity, Roman Catholicism. Themes such as interpretation and creation of Scriptures, worship style, central rituals, debates about right teaching (orthodoxy) mysticism and developing lifestyles both in and apart from the world.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

**REL_ST 2610: Medieval Christianity**
(same as HIST 2610). History of Christian practices and teachings from the 5th-15th centuries, including Byzantine and Western Christianity Themes such as the influence of the Islamic world on Christianity, popular and elite formulations of theology and ritual activities.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2610H: Medieval Christianity - Honors**
History of Christian practices and teachings from the 5th-15th centuries, including Byzantine and Western Christianity Themes such as the influence of the Islamic world on Christianity, popular and elite formulations of theology and ritual activities.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

**REL_ST 2620: History of Christianity, 1500-Present**
(same as HIST 2620). History of Christian practices and teachings from the 15th - 21st centuries, including global dimensions of Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and other forms of Christianity. Themes such as right teaching and practice, indigenous-Christian contact, mission and expansion, impact of secular theories, contemporary debates.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2620H: History of Christianity, 1500-Present - Honors**
History of Christian practices and teachings from the 15th - 21st centuries, including global dimensions of Orthodox, Catholic, Protestant and other forms of Christianity. Themes such as right teaching and practice, indigenous-Christian contact, mission and expansion, impact of secular theories, contemporary debates.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

**REL_ST 2630: History of Christian Traditions**
(same as HIST 2630). An overview of the origins and development of Christianities from the first century of the Common Era to the present day. Topic will include competing Christian theologies, colonialism, conversion narratives, globalization, religious violence, and heresy. May be repeated for credit.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2670: Islam**
Examines the historical development of Islamic traditions, noting the manner in which various sects & factions understand religion, humanity and God.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2680: Religious History of the Middle East II**
This course is a historical introduction to the religions of the pre-modern and modern Middle East. It follows the histories of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam from the defeat of the Mongol army in Palestine in 1260 to the present day. In particular it focuses on the social, political, and economic interactions of the Jewish, Christian, and Muslim populations, and the role religion has (and has not) played in the formation and development of the modern Middle East. Graded on A-F basis only.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2900: Contemporary Religious Thought**
Explores issues within contemporary Christian theology that cut across denominational lines such as: the nature and existence of God; secularization, relativism, and humanism; the authority of the Bible; attitudes toward other religions; the moral integrity of Christianity; and the purpose of human existence.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2910: Religion and Contemporary Social Issues**
Study of the social ethics of Jewish and Christian theologians and movements of the 19th and 20th centuries and an examination of selected social problems in light of these systems.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2920: Images of Good and Evil**
Study of the symbols and myths which explore the nature and power of good and evil. Includes examination of the music, art and literature of both ancient and contemporary religions.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2930: Religion and Psychological Perspectives**
Examines how religion is understood from various psychological perspectives, and how psychological theories reflect religious presuppositions about the nature and purpose of human life.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2939: Religion and Human Sexuality**
Examines attitudes within the Christian tradition toward sexuality, with particular reference to the alternatives of patriarchy and feminism, especially as they consider issues such as the meaning of bodiliness, masturbation, pornography, prostitution, homosexuality and sexual pluralism.

Credit Hours: 3

**REL_ST 2940: African Religions**
(same as BL_STU 2940). This course will serve as an introduction to various forms of religiosity in sub-Saharan Africa. Greater emphasis will be devoted to the indigenous religious traditions of the continent,
but we will also examine Christianity and Islam as they are practiced on the continent. The aim of this class is to help students to better understand various aspects of African cultures by dismantling stereotypes and assumptions that have long characterized the study of religions in Africa. The readings and lectures are will be drawn from historical, anthropological, sociological, and literary sources. Graded on A-F basis only.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 2950: Directed Readings in Religious Studies**
Independent readings selected in consultation with supervisory faculty member. May not be repeated.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** instructor's consent

**REL_ST 3000: History of Religion in America to the Civil War**
(same as HIST 3000). Surveys major American religious traditions, patterns, and themes from 1492 to the Civil War, especially the role of religion in American social, cultural, and political developments.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** sophomore standing or instructor's consent

**REL_ST 3000H: History of Religion in America to the Civil War - Honors**
Surveys major American religious traditions, patterns, and themes from 1492 to the Civil War, especially the role of religion in American social, cultural and political developments. Prerequisites: Honors Eligibility Required.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** sophomore standing or instructor's consent

**REL_ST 3001: Topics in Religious Studies-General**
Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3005: Topics in Religious Studies-Humanities**
Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3042: Sacred Humor: Tricksters, Clowns, and Contraries**
This class will explore the notion that humor plays an important role in conveying sacred meaning. To that end, we will need to adopt a fairly common vocabulary regarding the concepts "humor" and "sacred," and will do so while exploring some of the key aspects of the sacred humor discourse, especially the "trickster," "clown," and "contrary" motifs in mythic narrative.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3100: Religious Literacy for the Public and Professions**
This course teaches students to engage and encounter religion in day-to-day life and in the professional workplace. Its primary goal is to examine religious diversity in private and professional contexts from a practical standpoint by examining a variety of case studies.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3200: Hinduism**
(same as S_A_ST 3200). Origin and development of central themes of traditional Hinduism from earliest times to the modern period. Topics include: the Vedic tradition, rituals and practice, varieties of yoga, and meditation, Indian religious thought, and devotional Hinduism.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3210: History of Religion in Post-Civil War America**
(same as HIST 3210). Surveys major American religious traditions, patterns, and themes from 1865 to the present, especially the role of religion in American social, cultural and political developments.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3210H: History of Religion in Post-Civil War America - Honors**
Surveys major American religious traditions, patterns, and themes from 1865 to the present, especially the role of religion in American social, cultural and political developments. Prerequisites: Honors Eligibility Required.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** sophomore standing or instructor's consent

**REL_ST 3220: Tibetan Buddhism**
This course explores the Buddhist tradition in Tibet, from its introduction in the 8th century to the present. Topics include the merger of Indian Buddhism with the local Bon religion, the relationship between Tibetan Buddhism and Mahayana Buddhism, the Tibetan Buddhist canon, lamas and tulkus, religion and material culture in Tibet, and the influence of Tibetan Buddhism in Central Asia. Graded on A-F basis only.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3230: Buddhism and Environmental Ethics**
(same as S_A_ST 3230). Global environmental crisis is associated with rapidly expanding human population. Buddhist teachings about the interdependent aspects of existence and interrelatedness of all life may provide critical insights for how humanity can achieve balance and reciprocity with nature.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3240: Buddhism of South and Southeast Asia**
(same as S_A_ST 3240). Examines the origins of Buddhism in India, the narratives of the life of the Buddha, the development of early Buddhist schools, the extension of Buddhism into Central and Southeast Asia, and the current practice of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**REL_ST 3250: Buddhism in East Asia**
This course will trace the transmission of Buddhism from the Indian subcontinent to China, and from there to Korea and Japan. We will examine the historical development of East Asian forms of Buddhism,
deal with key issues of Buddhist thought and practice, and look at the role of Buddhism in modern East Asian societies.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: REL_ST 2110, REL_ST 2300, REL_ST 2310 or REL_ST 3200, or instructor’s consent

REL_ST 3260: Hindu Goddesses
(same as S.A_ST 3261). This course examines the vast range of Hindu Goddesses and their worship in South Asia. It includes information about goddess origins, mythology, symbolism, and attendant ritual practices. In order to approach this topic, background information about the history of Hinduism, major religious narratives, devotional practices, and iconographic representations of the divine are discussed. The course introduces the approaches of various scholars to Hindu Goddess worship within the context of religion, social relations, and gender roles, and explores ways in which South Asian women experience and negotiate feminine power in contemporary socio-cultural contexts.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3270: Yoga and Meditation in the Modern World
This course explores the practice of Yoga and meditation, both as an ancient tradition of India and as an example of the globalization of religion. It will examine how the ancient Hindu religious tradition of Yoga was reinvented against the backdrop of India’s colonial experience. Then it will look at a variety of emerging and transforming varieties of Hindu inspired yoga and meditation that spread globally in the context of increasing transnational interaction. To better appreciate both the traditional and the modern aspects of yoga and meditation, a secular meditation practice is included as an instructional and experiential component of this class.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3280: Chinese Popular Religion
Starting with a consideration of conceptual issues (what is “popular religion”?), the course will give a survey of the beliefs and practices of Chinese popular religion, including ancestor worship, territorial cults, spirit-mediumism, divination, and popular sects.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3300: The Prophets
Study of the prophetic writings of the Hebrew Scriptures, with consideration of the origin and nature of Israelite prophecy. Includes the narratives of the period of prophetic activity and study of the classical prophets.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3310: The Problem of Evil: Theodicy in the Ancient Near East
A comparative study of Ancient Near Eastern reflections on the question of why bad things happen to good people, aka the Problem of Evil. Students read primary texts in translation from Ancient Egypt, Ancient Mesopotamia, and Ancient Israel, including such famous texts as the Dispute between a Man and his Ba, the Babylonian Theodicy, and the book of Job. Students will discover how different beliefs about the origins of the universe, the relationship between humans and the divine, the notion of sin, and the causes of suffering lead to different answers to the age-old question of why the righteous suffer.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3350: Monsters in Western Religion and Folklore
This course focuses on monsters found in Western cultures and more specifically how monsters are instantiated and put to use in contexts of popular culture. Theoretical and methodological approaches to the material are drawn from both Religious Studies and Folkloristics. Graded on A-F basis only.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3360: Cults and New Religious Movements
While religious traditions constantly change, and new religions emerge in every historical time period, the new religious movements of the past century (many of which are often referred to negatively as “cults”) present a particular challenge to contemporary cultures and societies.

We will begin with a theoretical overview of new religious movements (NRMs) and will proceed gradually to discuss in detail the religion of the Peoples Temple and its charismatic leader and founder, Jim Jones. Recommended: An introductory course in any of the following disciplines/area studies: Religious Studies, Psychology, Communication Studies (emphasis on Media and Society/Media Theory); or Sociology.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3380H: Native American Religions - Honors
(same as ANTHRO 3380H). Investigation of religious lives of the native peoples of the Americas through cultural contact with modernity. Perspectives based on historical, anthropological and native texts.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3380: Native American Religions
(same as ANTHRO 3380). Investigation of religious lives of the native peoples of the Americas through cultural contact with modernity. Perspectives based on historical, anthropological and native texts.

Credit Hours: 3

Examination of the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke as single works and as literarily related compositions. Interpretation focuses on the literary form of passages and the theological and ethical themes expressed.

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Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required
REL_ST 3410: Cities and Letters of Paul: an Archaeological Investigation
This course combines a close contextual reading of the seven undisputed letters written by the apostle Paul and the three disputed letters of uncertain authorship coupled with an in-depth historical and archaeological investigation of the cities to which they were written. Students will learn about ancient letter writing, how the conventions used differed from modern practice, and how understanding those differences is essential for a more accurate reading of Paul. Likewise, this course will demonstrate that knowing the circumstances in which a letter was written sheds additional light on its contents and therefore investigates the historical and social conditions of Thessalonica, Corinith, Rome, Phillipi, the cities of Galatia, Ephesus, and Colossae in an effort better to understand the purposes for which Paul presumably wrote to the Christian communities in these cities.

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

REL_ST 3410H: Cities and Letters of Paul: an Archaeological Investigation - Honors
This course combines a close contextual reading of the seven undisputed letters written by the apostle Paul and the three disputed letters of uncertain authorship coupled with an in-depth historical and archaeological investigation of the cities to which they were written. Students will learn about ancient letter writing, how the conventions used differed from modern practice, and how understanding those differences is essential for a more accurate reading of Paul. Likewise, this course will demonstrate that knowing the circumstances in which a letter was written sheds additional light on its contents and therefore investigates the historical and social conditions of Thessalonica, Corinith, Rome, Phillipi, the cities of Galatia, Ephesus, and Colossae in an effort better to understand the purposes for which Paul presumably wrote to the Christian communities in these cities.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3420: Jesus in Myth, Tradition and History
This course will explore the identity and character of Jesus of Nazareth as depicted in various early Christian canonical and non-canonical sources and, using a variety of scholarly techniques, ascertain what information in those sources can be considered to describe accurately the real, historical Jesus.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3430: Revelation and Apocalyptic Literature - Honors
A study of Jewish and Christian apocalyptic literature with an emphasis on the Revelation to St. John.

Credit Hours: 3

Prerequisites: Honors eligibility required

REL_ST 3445: The Body in Western Christianity
This course is a survey of Western Christian Perspectives of the human body ranging from the Early Church Fathers to trends in contemporary American culture.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3445W: The Body in Western Christianity - Writing Intensive
This course is a survey of Western Christian Perspectives of the human body ranging from the Early Church Fathers to trends in contemporary American culture.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3451: Religion in Science Fiction
Investigation of religious themes in science fiction novels, short stories and films. Themes include the nature of the sacred, the limits of human knowledge, understanding and experiencing transcendence, revelation and apocalypse.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3451W: Religion in Science Fiction - Writing Intensive
Investigation of religious themes in science fiction novels, short stories and films. Themes include the nature of the sacred, the limits of human knowledge, understanding and experiencing transcendence, revelation and apocalypse.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3455: Robots and Religion: Reflection on Self, Soul, and Humanity
This course explores ancient and modern texts about robots, androids, and other artificial and virtual humans in order to analyze cultural and religious notions of what it means to be human. Course readings include ancient Indian, Tibetan, and Chinese robot stories in translation, medieval Jewish legends about golems, as well as contemporary Western science fiction

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3500: Judaism in the Time of Jesus
This course is an introduction to the origin and development of Judaism from the time of the destruction of the first Jerusalem temple (587 BCE) to the Bar Kochba revolt (132-135 CE).

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3530: Rabbinic Judaism: Perspective and Literature
Overview of the Jewish oral tradition during the Rabbinic era. The information covered in this course will focus upon the vast literature created during the Mishnaic and Talmudic periods and the emerging new styles and directions of Jewish religious thought.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3540: Jewish-Christian Relations
Explores historical and contemporary relations between Christians and Jews, and the transformations in Christian thought and practice resulting from awareness of Christianity’s role in the Holocaust and from post-Holocaust dialogues between Jews and Christians.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3600: Spirituality
Comparative investigation of selected mystical writings from Western religious traditions; consideration of contemporary psychological,
philosophical, and phenomenological interpretations of mystical experience.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3610: Angry Theologians
This course examines how intense debates and furious prose helped define many of modern Christianity's most widely agreed upon tenets of faith. Through close readings of theological treatises laced with profanity, insults, and outrage, we shall explore how central Christian theological convictions about baptism, the nature of Jesus, gender roles, sin, salvation, and other topics were constructed through argumentation and compromise. Though some theological disputes were settled politely through votes at church councils, even these peaceable compromises often emerged through a spate of insults and red-faced polemic. We shall read and discuss some of the most colorful—and enduringly influential—cases of theology developing through brash confrontation, from the Luther Insult Generator to the fiercely angry articulations of Christian theology in contemporary America. Students will learn to understand the logic and purpose behind these vehement arguments in their historical context and practice evaluating competing claims about complex issues such as the Trinity, the path to salvation, and sin. Graded on A-F basis only.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3700: Modern Religious Thought
Examination of the theological systems of major Christian thinkers and movements of the 19th and 20th centuries in relation to historic religious traditions and modern cultural challenges. Prerequisites: sophomore standing and one course in Philosophy, or instructor's consent.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3710: Reality of God
Will explore the meaning of "the loss of God" (Tillich) and various modern and contemporary attempts to reaffirm the reality of God.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3740: Religion and Film
Addresses issues of interpretation and analysis in the convergence of religion and film. Addresses three areas under this broad rubric: 1) film representations of established religions; 2) film and the construction of social values; 3) film as contemporary "myth". Treating films as social texts, we will ask what such representations of ourselves to ourselves suggest about culture in general.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3750: Women and Religions
(same as WGST 3750). A rediscovery of the wealth of religious activity which women have created and enacted. Investigates women's roles and rituals in large-scale and local religions, including ancient Goddess religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, and African, South American, and native American groups.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: sophomore standing

REL_ST 3760: Geography of the World's Religions
(same as GEOG 3760). Explores the significance of place in the origin, diffusion, distribution and practice of religions, emphasizing imprints of religion on the cultural landscape and connections between culture, politics, economics, and religion.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: 1000/2000 level Geography course; junior standing or instructor's consent

REL_ST 3760W: Geography of the World's Religions - Writing Intensive
(same as GEOG 3760). Explores the significance of place in the origin, diffusion, distribution and practice of religions, emphasizing imprints of religion on the cultural landscape and connections between culture, politics, economics, and religion.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: 1000/2000 level Geography course; junior standing or instructor's consent

REL_ST 3800: Religion in America Today
Explores in depth a few selected issues currently shaping or being shaped by religion in the United States. Specific topics will be chosen from events conflicts, developments, or news items within the last five years. Graded on A-F basis only.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: sophomore standing

REL_ST 3820: Religion and Law in America
This class explores how the U.S. legal system is navigating an increasing diversity of religious traditions. Course examines the place of religious values and the ongoing tension between religion and law in the legal system of the U.S. through a variety of controversial topics.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 3990: Majors Seminar
In this seminar religious studies majors will be encouraged to form a community of inquiry focused on the subject of religion and public life. Graded on S/U basis only.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Religious Studies majors in their junior year

REL_ST 4001: Topics in Religious Studies-General
Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: junior standing or instructor's consent

REL_ST 4005: Topics in Religious Studies-General
Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.

Credit Hours: 3
Religious Studies

REL_ST 4100: Advanced Theories and Methods
(cross-leveled with REL_ST 7100). The course investigates the history of the modern academic study of religion, closely exploring influential theories and methods that have shaped scholarly perspective. May include approaches such as structuralism, phenomenology, Durkheimian and Weberian sociology, Marxism, feminism, thick description, psychoanalysis, and others.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Restricted to Religious Studies majors and MA students

REL_ST 4100W: Advanced Theories and Methods - Writing Intensive
(cross-leveled with REL_ST 7100). The course investigates the history of the modern academic study of religion, closely exploring influential theories and methods that have shaped scholarly perspective. May include approaches such as structuralism, phenomenology, Durkheimian and Weberian sociology, Marxism, feminism, thick description, psychoanalysis, and others.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Restricted to Religious Studies majors and MA students

REL_ST 4110: Religious Myth and Ritual
(cross-leveled with REL_ST 7110). This course will unpack theoretical and methodological issues surrounding the study of embodied religious practice and the nature of religious narrative using myths and rituals from around the world's religious traditions.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4120: Studies in Ritual
Exploration of particular themes of religious expression in seasonal, calendric and life-cycle rituals and in personal and public ceremonies. Includes comparisons of indigenous communities and modern society.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4130: Haunting and Healing
This course explores instances, stories, and representations of haunting in the United States. We apply a variety of theoretical and methodological approaches to illuminate the diversity of meanings, functions, and contexts of supernatural beings in American popular and folk cultures.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4140: Religion, Spirituality, and the Brain
Explores neuropsychology of religion, spirituality, transcendence, and mystical experience. Covers development in neuroscience about how the brain works in a variety of religious and spiritual contexts, including prayer, meditation, and altered states of consciousness.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Restricted to juniors and seniors only

REL_ST 4200: Survey of West African and African Diasporic Religions
Explores indigenous African religions and Islam in West Africa, as well as the development of African American Christianity and African diasporic religions in the Americas.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4210: African-American Religion
(same as BL_STU 4210). Historical and thematic examination of African American religious traditions and practices. Addresses intersections of religious expression with race, identity, culture, and society.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4220: Archaeology of Religion
(same as ANTHRO 4280). This course examines how anthropologists conceptualize religious behavior, and how archaeologist use material remains to examine past religious behavior, rituals, religious practitioners, cosmological constructs, worldview and ideology in the Americas.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: ANTHRO 2020 and/or REL_ST 2100

REL_ST 4287: Empire: Intellectual History, Literature, and Society
(same as PEA_ST 4287; cross-leveled with REL_ST 7287). Intellectuals and writers passionately debated the wisdom of colonies, free trade, and war as economies became increasingly global over the centuries. The proponents, critics, and interpreters of Empire will offer us rich examples of themes and theories in the culture of specific nations and eras. Intellectual life will be studied in the context of developments in social inequality, the culture of classes, media of communication, education, identities, transnational governance, and the nation-state. The course will be offered with different national and historical foci under different instructors, and may be repeated for credit with different instructors. Counts as the capstone experience for Peace Studies and is open to majors of other disciplines.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4300: Religious Narratives of South Asia
(same as S_A_ST 4300). Study of major narratives of India and their interpretation in literature and art. Topics include: Vedic and Epic mythology, stories of Krishna, myths and images of Shiva, and forms of the Goddess.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4310: The Confucian Tradition: Past and Present
Investigates Confucianism as the dominant religio-philosophical tradition of China and its impact on Korea and Japan. We will study basic Confucian canonical texts, follow its historical development, look at its interactions with other religions, and discuss the continuing relevance of the Confucian tradition in modern East Asia.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 4320: Introduction to Daoism
An introduction to the Daoist religious tradition, beginning with its background in earlier forms of philosophy, ritual, and belief. We will follow the development of the various Daoist schools and movements over the centuries and examine key aspects of their belief and practice, both historical and contemporary.

Credit Hours: 3
REL ST 4380: Anthropological Theories of Religion
(same as ANTHRO 4380). Course provides a critical evaluation of anthropological explanations of various forms of traditional religious behavior such as magic, shamanism, divination, ritual, mythology, and witchcraft. The anthropological explanations examined range from nineteenth century classics to the current approaches of today.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** ANTHRO 2030, ANTHRO 2100 or REL_ST 2100, or instructor's consent

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REL ST 4400: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition
(cross-level with REL_ST 7110). Students will read the great thinkers of the Catholic church such as Augustine, Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Nicholas of Cusa, Pascal, Newman, Maritain, Rahner, Johnson, Tracy. The theme examined may vary from year to year.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4410: Major Religious Thinkers
Concentrated study of one or more selected theologians, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Buber, Tillich, and Rahner.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4418: Religion Reporting and Writing
(same as JOURN 4426). Advanced seminar in religion reporting and writing. Examines the role of religion journalism in faith, public life, and culture.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** JOURN 4450 professional writing experience and instructor's consent

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REL ST 4500: Greek and Roman Religion
(same as CL_HUM 4500). Survey of religious development among the Greeks and Romans.

**Credit Hours:** 3

**Prerequisites:** sophomore standing and CL_HUM 1060, AR_H_A 1110 or HIST 1520

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REL ST 4535: Monastic Worlds
Monastic Worlds is an experiential learning course designed to serve as a Humanities Field School in medieval and early modern studies. It will be taught by faculty from UMKC and UMC through the Intercampus Course Sharing initiative. This course introduces students to humanities research methodology and the religious history and culture of premodern Europe and the contemporary Midwest by using the monastic communities as a focal point to learn about musicology, history, art history, literature, and religion. Following two weeks of online course modules, students will travel to the Benedictine communities of Conception Abbey in Conception, Missouri and Mount Saint Scholastica's in Atchison, Kansas, for additional face-to-face classes and research projects. On-site, students will participate in communal living and attend face-to-face classes on the historical and cultural worlds of medieval and early modern Europe. They will practice ethnography through observation of and participation in communal life of prayer, study, book production, and labor. Students will also have the opportunity to work with the manuscripts and rare books owned by these communities and visit the largest reliquary collection in North America, housed at the nearby Benedictine community of the Sisters of Perpetual Adoration in Clyde, MO. This course has an associated fee. Contact teaching faculty for this year's fee details.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4550: The Historical Jesus
This course examines theory, method, and conclusions in recent Jesus scholarship. Attention is also paid to the historical and cultural context in which Jesus research becomes prominent.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4630: Sanskrit I
(same as S_A_ST 4350). This intensive course will cover the essentials of Sanskrit grammar in one semester and prepare students for further readings in Hindu and Buddhist literature.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4640: Sanskrit II
(same as S_A_ST 4640). This course is intended as a “sampler” of Sanskrit literature. We will read Sanskrit texts in the original. The objectives of the course are 1) Expanding the students’ knowledge of the Sanskrit language, 2) To acquaint the students with a broad range of textual genres in Sanskrit literature, and 3) To acquaint the students with some central ideas of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4750: Women, Religion and Culture
(same as WGST 4750). An advanced study of the role of women in religion, focusing on the methods of determining the significance of gender in religious life, sacred texts, symbols, rituals and/or beliefs. Traditions studied include Christianity, Islam, contemporary pagan communities, and Native American traditions.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 4960: Directed Readings in Religious Studies
Independent readings selected in consultation with supervisory faculty member. May be repeated up to 6 hrs.

**Credit Hour:** 1-6

**Prerequisites:** instructor's consent

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REL ST 4990: Senior Seminar in Religious Studies
A seminar in which Religious Studies majors use methods of understanding and comparing religions by focusing on times and places of significant contact among peoples of different religions.

**Credit Hours:** 3

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REL ST 7001: Topics in Religious Studies-General
Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.

**Credit Hours:** 3
REL_ST 7005: Topics in Religious Studies - General
Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7110: Advanced Theories and Methods
(cross-leveled with REL_ST 4100). The course investigates the history of the modern academic study of religion, closely exploring influential theories and methods that have shaped scholarly perspective. May include approaches such as structuralism, phenomenology, Durkheimian and Weberian sociology, Marxism, feminism, thick description, psychoanalysis, and others.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: Restricted to Religious Studies major or minor or instructor's consent

REL_ST 7110: Religious Myth and Ritual
(cross-leveled with REL_ST 4110). Comparative analysis of religious mythologies and symbolism as well as the ritual systems associated with those mythologies.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: instructor's consent

REL_ST 7120: Studies in Ritual
Exploration of particular themes of religious expression in seasonal, calendric and life-cycle rituals and in personal and public ceremonies. Includes comparisons of indigenous communities and modern society.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7150: Religion, Spirituality, and the Brain
Explores neuropsychology of religion, spirituality, transcendence, and mystical experience. Covers development in neuroscience about how the brain works in a variety of religious and spiritual contexts, including prayer, meditation, and altered states of consciousness.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7280: Archaeology of Religion
(Same as ANTHRO 7280) This course examines how anthropologists conceptualize religious behavior, and how archaeologists use material remains to examine past religious behavior, rituals, religious practitioners, cosmological constructs, worldview and ideology in the Americas.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: ANTHRO 2020 and/or REL_ST 2100

REL_ST 7287: Empire: Intellectual History, Literature, and Society
(same as PEA_ST 7287; cross-leveled with REL_ST 4287). Intellectuals and writers passionately debated the wisdom of colonies, free trade, and war as economies became increasingly global over the centuries. The proponents, critics, and interpreters of Empire will offer us rich examples of themes and theories in the culture of specific nations and eras. Intellectual life will be studied in the context of developments in social inequality, the culture of classes, media of communication, education, identities, transnational governance, and the nation-state. The course will be offered with different national and historical foci under different instructors, and may be repeated for credit with different instructors.

Credit Hours: 3

Counts as the capstone experience for Peace Studies and is open to majors of other disciplines.

REL_ST 7380: Anthropological Theory of Religions
(same as ANTHRO 7380). Course provides a critical evaluation of anthropological explanations of various forms of traditional religious behavior such as magic, shamanism, divination, ritual, mythology and witchcraft. The anthropological explanations examined range from nineteenth century classics to the current approaches of today.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7418: Religion Reporting and Writing
(same as JOURN 7426). Advanced seminar in religion reporting and writing. Examines the role of religion journalism in faith, public life, and culture.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: JOURN 4450 and instructor's consent

REL_ST 7500: Greek and Roman Religion
Survey of religious development among the Greeks and Romans.

Credit Hours: 3
Prerequisites: sophomore standing and CL_HUM 1060, AR_H_A 1110 or HIST 1520

REL_ST 7510: The Catholic Intellectual Tradition
(cross-leveled with REL_ST 4400). Students will read the great thinkers of the Catholic church such as Augustine, Abelard, Bernard of Clairvaux, Aquinas, Bonaventure, Nicholas of Cusa, Pascal, Newman, Maritain, Rahner, Johnson, Tracy. The theme examined may vary from year to year.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7520: Major Religious Thinkers
Concentrated study of one or more selected theologians, such as Augustine, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Buber, Tillich, and Rahner.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7630: Sanskrit I
(same as S_A_ST 7630). This intensive course will cover the essentials of Sanskrit grammar in one semester and prepare students for further readings in Hindu and Buddhist literature.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 7640: Sanskrit II
(same as S_A_ST 7640). This course is intended as a "sampler" of Sanskrit literature. We will read Sanskrit tests in the original. The objectives of the course are 1) Expanding the students' knowledge of the Sanskrit language, 2) To acquaint the students with a broad range of textual genres in Sanskrit literature, and 3) To acquaint the students with some central ideas of Hindu and Buddhist philosophy.

Credit Hours: 3
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Credit Hours</th>
<th>Prerequisites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>REL_ST 7700</td>
<td>Religious Narratives of South Asia</td>
<td>Study of major narratives of India and their interpretation in literature and art. Topics include: Vedic and Epic mythology, stories of Krishna, myths and images of Shiva, and forms of the Goddess.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>REL_ST 2110, REL_ST 3200, or REL_ST 3240, or instructor's consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL_ST 7710</td>
<td>The Confucian Tradition: Past and Present</td>
<td>Investigates Confucianism as the dominant religio-philosophical tradition of China and its impact on Korea and Japan. We will study basic Confucian canonical texts, follow its historical development, look at its interactions with other religions, and discuss the continuing relevance of the Confucian tradition in modern East Asia.</td>
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<td>REL_ST 7720</td>
<td>Introduction to Daoism</td>
<td>An introduction to the Daoist religious tradition, beginning with its background in earlier forms of philosophy, ritual, and belief. We will follow the development of the various Daoist schools and movements over the centuries and examine key aspects of their belief and practice, both historical and contemporary.</td>
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<td>REL_ST 7750</td>
<td>Women, Religion and Culture</td>
<td>An advanced study of the role of women in religion, focusing on the methods of determining the significance of gender in religious life, sacred texts, symbols, rituals and/or beliefs. Traditions studied include Christianity, Islam, contemporary pagan communities, and Native American traditions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 7800</td>
<td>West African and African Diasporic Religions</td>
<td>Explores traditional African religions and African Islam prior to the slave trade. Also, will examine the Christianity of African American slaves.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 7810</td>
<td>African-American Religion</td>
<td>(same as BL_STU 7810). Examines the organization of major African American Christian denominations, Islam and religious movements. Twentieth century issues will be discussed, including sexism, classism and homophobia in church communities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 7990</td>
<td>Independent Readings in Religious Studies</td>
<td>Independent readings and research selected in consultation with supervisory faculty.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8001</td>
<td>Topics in Religious Studies-General</td>
<td>Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8005</td>
<td>Topics in Religious Studies-Humanities</td>
<td>Organized study of selected topics which vary by semester and are announced at time of registration.</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8010</td>
<td>Proseminar in Method and Theory in the Study of Religion</td>
<td>Proseminar in classic and recent theoretical and methodological perspectives in the academic study of religion. This course is required of all graduate students in Religious Studies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8090</td>
<td>Research and Thesis in Religious Studies</td>
<td>Research and writing for master's thesis. Graded on S/U basis only.</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>Instructor's consent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8200</td>
<td>Religious Texts and Interpretation: The Veda</td>
<td>(same as S_A_ST 7200). This course examines the Veda, the foundational scripture of Hinduism. It includes close study of Vedic texts and rituals and the influence, interpretation, and application of the Veda in the later Hinduism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8210</td>
<td>Indian Buddhism</td>
<td>This course examines the role of sacred texts in the Theravada and Mayayana Buddhist traditions. The course will emphasize canon formation and ideas about sacred texts in Buddhist traditions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8250</td>
<td>Religious Texts and Interpretation: Gospel Literature</td>
<td>The seminar includes comparative study of ancient gospels, and an examination of modern theories about the development of Jesus traditions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8400</td>
<td>Religious History: Christian Interpretative Communities</td>
<td>This course compares notions of religious authority in the sixteenth century: the Roman Catholic Church's Scripture and tradition and the Protestant principle of sola scriptura. The focus is the doctrine of the Eucharistic disputes carried on throughout the sixteenth century.</td>
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<tr>
<td>REL_ST 8430</td>
<td>Religious History: West African Interpretative Communities</td>
<td>In this study of West African religious history, we will examine indigenous African religions, Islam, and Christianity. We will consider the impact of the slave trade, environmental changes, prophetic movements, and changes in the status of women. We will also evaluate theoretical perspectives on the study of Africa, of &quot;traditional religions&quot; and oral traditions.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
REL_ST 8440: Religion, Globalization and Local Cultures
Interdisciplinary, comparative approach to globalization's religious dimensions and productions in a variety of specific sites around the world.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 8500: History of Religion and Everyday Life in America
This graduate seminar will familiarize you with several theoretical and methodological issues involved in the study of religion in everyday life, its historical recovery and interpretation, and its presentation. We will focus on examples of scholarship on U. S. history.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 8600: Comparative Studies in Spirit Possession
This course will investigate four distinct Afro-Latin religious traditions of the Americas, including traditions from Haiti, Cuba, Brazil and Honduras, as well as comparative examples from South Asia, Europe and North Africa. We will read and discuss such issues as 1) spirit possession and narratively; 2) spirit possession as "history"; 3) possession as dramatic performance; 4) the relationship between sacrifice and possession trance. Through careful exploration of their histories and contemporary practice, the class will attempt general comparisons between the religion as well as the critical review of comparative methods employed.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 8700: Seminar in Folklore
(same as ANTHRO 8157 and ENGLSH 8700). Focus on the roots of folklore scholarship and methodology and their evolution in modern approaches to the study of oral, traditional verbal genres and their performance in natural folk groups.

Credit Hours: 3

REL_ST 8710: Comparative Religion: Popular Religion
Popular religion is the lived religion of the common people which takes shape in contact with and distinction from the religion(s) of the elite(s) of a society. This course introduces concepts and theories of popular religion, and investigates its role in various traditions, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Chinese religions.

Credit Hours: 3