

## Religion

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Professor: John C. Holt (Asian Studies)

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The Department of Religion offers students opportunities to study the major religions of the world, East and West, ancient and modern, from a variety of academic viewpoints and without sectarian bias.

Each major is assigned a departmental advisor who assists the student in formulating a plan of study in religion and related courses in other departments. The advisor also provides counsel in career planning and graduate study.

### Requirements for the Major in Religion

The major consists of at least nine courses in religion. Required courses include **Religion 101 (Introduction to the Study of Religion)**; **Religion 390 (Theories about Religion)**; and four courses at the 200 level, including one each from the following four designated areas: (1) **Religion 215 (The Hebrew Bible in Its World)**, **Religion 216 (The New Testament in Its World)**, or **Religion 275 (Comparative Mystical Traditions)**; (2) **Religion 251 (Christianity)**, **Religion 252 (Marxism and Religion)**, **Religion 253 (Gender, Body, and Religion)**, or **Religion 259 (Religious Toleration and Human Rights)**; (3) **Religion 220 (Hindu Literatures)**, **Religion 221 (Hindu Cultures)**, **Religion 222 (Theravada Buddhism)**, or **Religion 223 (Mahayana Buddhism)**; (4) **Religion 207 (Introduction to Judaism)**, **Religion 208 (Islam)**, **Religion 210 (Esoteric Themes in Islamic Thought)**, or **Religion 232 (Approaches to the Qur'an)**. In addition, candidates for honors complete a tenth course, advanced independent study, as part of their honors projects. (See below, "Honors in Religion.")

No more than one first-year seminar may be counted toward the major. In order to enroll in **Religion 390**, a major normally will be expected to have taken four of the nine required courses. This seminar is also open to qualified non-majors with permission of the instructor. Normally, no more than three courses taken at other colleges or universities will count toward the major. No courses graded Credit/D/Fail may count towards the major or minor.

### Honors in Religion

Students contemplating honors candidacy should possess a record of distinction in departmental courses, including those that support the project, a clearly articulated and well-focused research proposal, and a high measure of motivation and scholarly maturity. Normally, proposals for honors projects shall be submitted for departmental approval along with registration for advanced independent study, and in any case no later than the end of the second week of the semester in which the project is undertaken. It is recommended, however, that honors candidates incorporate work from **Religion 390** as part of their honors projects, or complete two semesters of independent study in preparing research papers for honors consideration. In this latter case, proposals are due no later than the second week of the fall semester of the senior year.

### Requirements for the Minor in Religion

A minor consists of five courses—**Religion 101**, three courses at the 200 level or higher (among these three electives, at least one course shall be in Western religions and cultures and one in Asian religions and cultures) and **Religion 390**.

### First-Year Seminars

These introductory courses focus on the study of a specific aspect of religion, and may draw on other fields of learning. They are not intended as prerequisites for more advanced courses in the department unless specifically designated as such. They include readings, discussion, reports, and writing. Topics change from time to time to reflect emerging or debated issues in the study of religion. For a full description of first-year seminars, see pages 149–60.

**10c. Seeking a Historical Jesus.** Fall 2009. DANIEL ULLUCCI.

[**14c. Heresy and Orthodoxy.**]

[**16c. Sex and the Church.** (Same as **Gay and Lesbian Studies 16** and **Gender and Women's Studies 17.**)]

[**19c. Interpreting Religious Quests.**]

**25c. The Islamic Revolution of Iran.** Fall 2009. ROBERT G. MORRISON.

### Introductory Courses

**101c - ESD. Introduction to the Study of Religion.** Spring 2010. ELIZABETH PRITCHARD.

Basic concepts, methods, and issues in the study of religion, with special reference to examples comparing and contrasting Eastern and Western religions. Lectures, films, discussions, and readings in a variety of texts such as scriptures, novels, and autobiographies, along with modern interpretations of religion in ancient and contemporary, Asian and Western contexts.

**125c - ESD, IP. Entering Modernity: European Jewry.** Spring 2011. SUSAN L. TANANBAUM.

Explores Jewish life through the lenses of history, religion, and ethnicity and examines the processes by which governments and sections of the Jewish community attempted to incorporate Jews and Judaism into European society. Surveys social and economic transformations of Jews, cultural challenges of modernity, varieties of modern Jewish religious expression, political ideologies, the Holocaust, establishment of Israel, and American Jewry through primary and secondary sources, lectures, films, and class discussions. (Same as **History 125.**)

**142c. Philosophy of Religion.** Spring 2011. SCOTT R. SEHON.

Does God exist? Can the existence of God be proven? Can it be disproven? Is it rational to believe in God? What does it *mean* to say that God exists (or does not exist)? What distinguishes religious beliefs from non-religious beliefs? What is the relation between religion and science? Approaches these and related questions through a variety of historical and contemporary sources, including philosophers, scientists, and theologians. (Same as **Philosophy 142.**)

### Intermediate Courses

[**200c. Creating the World: Genesis and Its Interpreters.** (Same as **History 200.**)]

**204c. Science, Magic, and Religion.** Spring 2010. DALLAS DENERY.

Traces the origins of the scientific revolution through the interplay between late-antique and medieval religion, magic, and natural philosophy. Particular attention is paid to the conflict between paganism and Christianity, the meaning and function of religious miracles, the rise and persecution of witchcraft, and Renaissance hermeticism. (Same as **History 204.**)

*Note:* This course fulfills the pre-modern requirement for history majors.

**[205c. Evil in Religious Contexts.]****[207c - ESD. Introduction to Judaism.]****208c - IP. Islam.** Fall 2009. ROBERT G. MORRISON.

With an emphasis on primary sources, pursues major themes in Islamic civilization from the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad until the present. From philosophy to political Islam, and from mysticism to Muslims in America, explores the diversity of a rapidly growing religious tradition.

**210c - IP. Esoteric Themes in Islamic Thought.** Spring 2010. ROBERT G. MORRISON.

Explores, historically, the development and growth of Sufism and other esoteric movements of Islam. Questions that will arise include: Do these esoteric and mystical ideas supplant or complement the exoteric practices and beliefs of Islam? Why is Sufism important for Sufis? How do we study religious ideas that thrive, sometimes, on defying description?

**[215c - ESD. The Hebrew Bible in Its World.]****216c - ESD. The New Testament in Its World.** Fall 2009. DANIEL ULLUCCI.

Situates the Christian New Testament in its Hellenistic cultural context. While the New Testament forms the core of the course, attention is paid to parallels and differences in relation to other Hellenistic religious texts: Jewish, (other) Christian, and pagan. Religious leadership, rituals, secrecy, philosophy of history, and salvation are some of the main themes.

**219c. Religion and Fiction in Modern South Asia.** Spring 2010. JOHN HOLT.

A study of the Hindu and Buddhist religious cultures of modern South Asia as they have been imagined, represented, interpreted, and critiqued in the literary works of contemporary and modern South Asian writers of fiction and historical novels, including Salman Rushdie (*Midnight's Children*, *The Satanic Verses*), V. S. Naipaul (*An Area of Darkness*, *India: A Million Mutinies Now?*), Gita Mehta (*A River Sutra*), etc. **Religion 220** or **221** recommended. (Same as **Asian Studies 219.**)

**[220c - IP. Hindu Literatures.** (Same as **Asian Studies 240.**)]**[221c - IP. Hindu Cultures.** (Same as **Asian Studies 241.**)]**222c - ESD, IP. Theravada Buddhism.** Fall 2009. JOHN HOLT.

An examination of the major trajectories of Buddhist religious thought and practice as understood from a reading of primary and secondary texts drawn from the Theravada traditions of India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma. (Same as **Asian Studies 242.**)

**223c - IP. Mahayana Buddhism.** Spring 2010. JOHN HOLT.

Studies the emergence of Mahayana Buddhist worldviews as reflected in primary sources of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese origins. Buddhist texts include the *Buddhacarita* ("Life of Buddha"), the *Sukhavati Vyuha* ("Discourse on the 'Pure Land'"), the *Vajraccedika Sutra* (the "Diamond-Cutter"), the *Prajnaparamitra-hrdaya Sutra* ("Heart Sutra of the Perfection of Wisdom"), the *Saddharmapundarika Sutra* (the "Lotus Sutra"), and the *Platform Sutra of the Sixth Patriarch*, among others. (Same as **Asian Studies 223.**)

[232c - IP. Approaches to the Qur'an.]

[251c. Christianity.]

**252c. Marxism and Religion.** Spring 2010. ELIZABETH PRITCHARD.

Despite Karl Marx's famous denunciation of religion as the "opiate of the masses," Marxism and religion have become companionable in the last several decades. Examines this development through the works of thinkers and activists from diverse religious frameworks, including Catholicism and Judaism, who combine Marxist convictions and analyses with religious commitments in order to further their programs for social emancipation. Included are works by liberation theologians Hugo Assmann, Leonardo Boff, and José Miguez Bonino, and philosophers Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, and Cornel West.

**253c - ESD. Gender, Body, and Religion.** Fall 2009. ELIZABETH PRITCHARD.

A significant portion of religious texts and practices is devoted to the disciplining and gendering of bodies. Examines these disciplines including ascetic practices, dietary restrictions, sexual and purity regulations, and boundary maintenance between human and divine, public and private, and clergy and lay. Topics include desire and hunger, abortion, women-led religious movements, the power of submission, and the related intersections of race and class. Materials are drawn from Christianity, Judaism, Neopaganism, Voudou, and Buddhism. (Same as **Gender and Women's Studies 256.**)

**259c. Religious Toleration and Human Rights.** Fall 2009. ELIZABETH PRITCHARD.

Is toleration a response to difference we cannot do without or is it simply a strategy for producing religious subjectivities that are compliant with liberal political rule? Is toleration a virtue like forgiveness or a poor substitute for justice? Examines the relationship between early modern European arguments for toleration and the emergence of universal human rights as well as the continuing challenges that beset their mutual implementation. Some of these challenges include confronting the Christian presuppositions of liberal toleration, accommodating the right to religious freedom while safeguarding cultural diversity by prohibiting proselytism, and translating arguments for religious toleration to the case for nondiscrimination of sexual orientations and relationships. In addition to case studies and United Nations documents, course readings include selections from Locke, Marx, Heyd, Walzer, Brown, Pellegrini, and Richards.

**275b - ESD. Comparative Mystical Traditions.** Fall 2010. JORUNN BUCKLEY.

Taking a clue from the Greek verb behind the term "mysticism," "to see inwardly" (*muein*), studies primary texts—some "classical," others less well known—with a specific focus on Jewish, Hellenistic, Christian, and Islamic materials. Avoiding "universal" ideas about mystical traditions, places mystical aspects within their specific religious traditions. Focuses on the language(s) of mysticism: how are mystical techniques, training regimens, and experiences expressed in their respective religious-cultural frameworks? Mysticism is seen as separate from modern "self-help" therapies and other ego-enhancing systems. Religious-political aspects of mysticism are treated, especially with respect to certain types of medieval European Christian mysticism.

**289c - IP. Construction of the Goddess and Deification of Women in Hindu Religious Tradition.** Fall 2009. SREE PADMA HOLT.

Focuses include (1) an examination of the manner in which the power of the feminine has been expressed mythologically and theologically in Hinduism; (2) how various categories of goddesses can be seen or not as the forms of the "great goddess"; and (3) how Hindu women

have been deified, a process that implicates the relationship between the goddess and women. Students read a range of works, primary sources such as *Devi Mahatmya*, biographies and myths of deified women, and recent scholarship on goddesses and deified women. (Same as **Asian Studies 289** and **Gender and Women's Studies 289**.)

**291c–294c. Intermediate Independent Study in Religion.** THE DEPARTMENT.

#### Advanced Courses

The following courses study in depth a topic of limited scope but major importance, such as one or two individuals, a movement, type, concept, problem, historical period, or theme. Topics change from time to time. **Religion 390** is required for majors, and normally presupposes that four of nine required courses have been taken.

[**310c - ESD. Gnosticism.**]

[**318c. Pilgrimage: Narrative and Ritual.** (Same as **Asian Studies 318**.)]

[**321c. Medieval Drama.** (Same as **English 321**.)]

**330c. Judaism Under Islam.** Spring 2010. ROBERT MORRISON.

Since the rise of Islam in the early seventh century C.E., Jews have lived in the Islamic world. The historical experience of these Jews has shaped their religious traditions in ways that have touched Jews worldwide. Places developments in Jewish liturgy, thought, and identity within the context of Islamic civilization. Answers the question of how Jews perceive themselves and Judaism with regard to Muslims and Islam.

**390c. Theories about Religion.** Fall 2009. JOHN HOLT.

Seminar focused on how religion has been explained and interpreted from a variety of intellectual and academic perspectives from the sixteenth century to the present. In addition to a historical overview of religion's interpretation and explanation, the focus also includes consideration of postmodern critiques and the problem of religion and violence in the contemporary world.

Prerequisite: **Religion 101**.

**401c–404c. Advanced Independent Study and Honors in Religion.** THE DEPARTMENT.

## Romance Languages

Arielle Saiber, *Department Chair*  
Kate Flaherty, *Department Coordinator*

*Professors:* John H. Turner, William C. VanderWolk

*Associate Professors:* Elena Cueto-Asín, Charlotte Daniels†, Katherine Dauge-Roth,  
Arielle Saiber, Enrique Yepes

*Assistant Professors:* Nadia V. Celis, Gustavo Faverón-Patriau, Margaret Hanétha Vété-Congolo

*Lecturers:* Davida Gavioli, Anna Rein, Eugenia Wheelwright‡

*Visiting Faculty:* Anelle Curulla, Valérie Guillet, Lindsay Kaplan, Karen Lindo, María Bález Marco, Esmeralda A. Ulloa, Carolyn Wolfenzon

*Teaching Fellows:* Aurélie LeSaint, Boris Romero-Ponce, Léah Schmid