

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RLST)

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## RLST 1610 - Introduction to Religious Studies (3 Credits)

Religion is a complex phenomenon which involves social norms, beliefs and fears, and overarching world view. Religious experiences are among the most profound an individual can have. The course examines religious phenomena from various perspectives, including philosophical, historical, psychological, anthropological, political, sociological, the symbolic and ritual. GT: Course is approved by the Colorado Dept of Higher Education for statewide guaranteed transfer, GT-AH3

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, Humanities; GT courses GT Pathways, GT-AH3, Arts Hum: Ways of Thinking.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer.

## RLST 2660 - World Religions (3 Credits)

Provides an introduction to the basic beliefs and concepts of the world's great religious traditions. Covers the history, development, belief patterns, and institutional forms of the world's religions, including Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and Shintoism. GT: Course is approved by the Colorado Dept of Higher Education for statewide guaranteed transfer, GT-AH3

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, Humanities; GT courses GT Pathways, GT-AH3, Arts Hum: Ways of Thinking.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer.

## RLST 2680 - The American Indian Experience (3 Credits)

Surveys the relationships between Indian and non-Indian peoples, particularly in the context of the unique interaction between tribes and the federal government. Cross-listed with ETST 2606.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 2700 - The Bible as Literature (3 Credits)

Introduces students to biblical literature. Selections from the various genres of writing in Hebrew (history, wisdom, prophecy, literature) are read and discussed, as well as representative sections from the New Testament, including the gospels and the writings of Paul. Cross-listed with ENGL 2520.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 3000 - Judaism, Christianity and Islam: Affinity and Difference (3 Credits)

Judaism, Christianity and Islam have much in common, beginning with their common patriarch Abraham. But there are also elements in each that are unrecognizable from the perspectives of the other two. This course will trace the relationships among the Children of Abraham across history and in today's turbulent world.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

## RLST 3003 - From Buddha to #BlackLivesMatter: The Past and Future of Nonviolence (3 Credits)

Why is "Nonviolence" central to many of the religious traditions of South Asia? What has nonviolence looked like historically and how has its meaning and practice changed in the modern world? In traditions such as Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, the practice of nonviolence relates to ethics through concepts of "karma" in our actions. This course begins with an investigation of the theories of karma and the roles they play in these traditions' ideas about the self, the other, and the world. We will take a focused look at the way each tradition regards the idea and practice of ahimsa, nonviolence, as both an ethical and personal good. That is, how does each tradition consider what is proper social action and how do they relate it to the attainment of salvation (i.e. moksha, nirvana)? The course puts Indian thought in conversation with western philosophies to question how we might develop a critical vocabulary for the comparative study of ethics. Turning to the modern era, we will examine Gandhi's philosophy and practice of nonviolent action in the anti-colonial struggle for India's independence, as well as how Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King adapted Gandhi's ideas to the struggle for civil rights in the US. Finally, we will examine recent critiques of nonviolence from American philosophers, activists, and communities of color to see ways that nonviolence continues to play a role in rethinking major issues for fostering equality and equity in the US and global contexts, including policing and religious and ethnic nationalism. Cross-listed with ETST 3003, HIST 3003, INTS 3003, PHIL 3003, HIST 5003

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring.

## RLST 3060 - History of Early Christianity (3 Credits)

History of the rise of Christianity and the decline of paganism in the Roman Empire from the birth of Jesus of Nazareth to ca. 500 C.E. Special emphasis on social, historical, legal, and cultural context of Christianity's rise and paganism's decline.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 3100 - Islamic Politics and Culture (3 Credits)

Comprehensive, in-depth study of Islam and Muslims. Islam is viewed as a "way of life" with social, economic, psychological, spiritual, and political implications. Among topics to be examined are: women in Islam, Jihad, fundamentalism, Islamic movements, Islam and the West. Cross-listed with PSCI 4165.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

## RLST 3120 - Islamic Traditions (3 Credits)

Examines birth and history of Islam, its evolution from beginning to current trends and issues. Covers core beliefs, practices, differences between Sunni and Shi'a sects, and relationship to other Western religions.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, International Perspectives.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring.

## RLST 3300 - Shamanic Traditions (3 Credits)

Explores shamanic religious traditions across the world. This form of religion, involving spiritism, animism, trance states, and "mind power," is the oldest and most widespread religion in world history. Cross-listed with ETST 3300.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 3410 - Asian Philosophies and Religions (3 Credits)**

We in the Western world encounter a vastly different world, a radically different "universe of meaning," when we examine the traditions of the East. Even what we tacitly assume to be "real" is claimed by the Hindus and Buddhists of India to be a grand illusion. The world of China is, again, very different from India. An examination of Tibetan and Japanese religious forms will conclude our study of Asian thought. Cross-listed with PHIL 3410.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, International Perspectives.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring.

**RLST 3486 - Renaissance and Reformation (3 Credits)**

Explores the late 13th through middle 17th centuries when European art and culture changed dramatically, and when Europe was torn by explosive ideological conflicts and religious upheaval. Cross-listed with HIST 3486.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

**RLST 3500 - Religions of India (3 Credits)**

Examines the transcendentalist philosophy of India, which rests at the foundation of the great Eastern religious traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism. The Indian ideas of God, the soul, time, the nature of the universe, and its ultimate goal are examined.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

**RLST 3660 - Chinese Philosophy and Culture (3 Credits)**

China is a fascinating world with its own characteristic orientation to philosophical questions. Chinese thinkers produced the "Flowering of a Hundred Schools of Thought" in the Axial Age, the same period of time in which philosophy was coming to birth in ancient Greece. Covers some of the Chinese schools, including Confucianism, Taoism, Mohism, Legalism, Chinese "Logic," and the later schools of Neo-Confucianism, Neo-Taoism, and Chinese Buddhism. Cross-listed with PHIL 3981, PHIL 5981

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 3720 - Religious Narratives (3 Credits)**

Investigates the language and structure of religious discourse in Western literature. Welcomes interdisciplinary and comparative perspectives with a focus on cultural constructions of the sacred. Cross-listed with ENGL 3520.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 3740 - Biblical Traditions: Old Testament (3 Credits)**

Investigates the history and nature of the Biblical text. Follows the tradition of critical scholarship beginning in the Enlightenment era and continued down to the present day, sometimes entitled "Secular Humanism." Topics include theories of authorship of the Torah, its general nature and content; the historical books of the Bible, the Prophets, and the Wisdom Literature.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 3760 - Biblical Studies: New Testament (3 Credits)**

Examines the books of the New Testament from a scholarly, historical-critical perspective, which views it as a historically and culturally conditioned text, reflecting the beliefs and attitudes of the authors who produced it. The course covers the canonical gospels, letters, and other writings of the New Testament.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 3770 - Archaeological Discoveries Relating to the Bible (3 Credits)**

Examines the revolutionary impact of archaeology on Biblical Studies. Among these discoveries are Egyptian, Mesopotamian, and Canaanite texts, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Gnostic texts. Through these investigations, the Bible will be placed in its appropriate historical, literary and cultural context.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 3800 - Spirituality and Ecology in Global Societies (3 Credits)**

This course will examine the historical and contemporary attitudes and actions of religion in responding to the societal impacts of environmental concerns. We will investigate four worldviews in particular: indigenous traditions, Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism, and also consider how these traditions interact with public policy debates and their position on social justice and environmental issues. Religions both create and mitigate conflict. This course will consider ethical and moral approaches, philosophical principles and social movements including ecofeminism and ethics to provide tools for dialogue and critical thinking around ecological challenges.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, Social Sciences.

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4000 - Religion and Cultural Diversity (3 Credits)**

Religion is one of the key elements which creates multiculturalism. This course explores issues in religion and religious identity in contemporary America, including Native American spiritual traditions, Jewish-American traditions, Muslim-American traditions, Asian-American traditions, the African-American Pentecostal movement, and the growth of the Black Muslim movement. Attention is also given to the question of gender issues, as the traditional model for gender roles was formulated, in part, from a religious basis.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, Cultural Diversity.

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4002 - Race, Gender and Religious Nationalisms in Asia and the US (3 Credits)**

This course investigates ideologies and practices of race, caste, ethnicity, and gender at the foundations of several contemporary religious nationalist movements in Asia and the US. The course focuses first on the ways that religious ideologies and practices of gender help to define and police the borders of race, caste, and ethnicity as social identities. We will examine how these ideologies emerge in religious texts and how they have been challenged in literature and practice, both historically and in the modern era, while privileging the works, voices, and perspectives of women and queer caste-oppressed and racialized philosophers, activists, and thinkers. The course then seeks to give students conceptual and theoretical foundations to understand the relationship between race/caste/ethnicity and gender in religious nationalisms, while presenting case studies from Asia and the US to reflect on and challenge these models. Students will have the opportunity to conduct further research into these issues in Asia, the US, and other parts of the world. Cross-listed with HIST 4002, CHIN 4002, ETST 4002, INTS 4002, and HIST 5002.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring.

**RLST 4010 - Comparative Religious Systems (3 Credits)**

A cross-cultural analysis of religious belief and behavior. Emphasis is placed on religions found among non-Western cultural groups and includes consideration of how major religions of the world are manifested on local levels. Cross-listed with ANTH 4130, 5130, RLST 5010.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 4020 - Sociology of Religion (3 Credits)**

This course introduces students to the nature and functions of religion in society, emphasizing western religions in the U.S. Students will develop and apply an understanding of classic and modern sociological theories of religion to current events and disciplinary developments. Cross-listed with SOCY 4610, SOCY 5610, RLST 5020.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Prereq: junior standing or higher

Typically Offered: Fall.

**RLST 4030 - Race, Religion and Belonging in the United States (3 Credits)**

Race/ethnicity and religion are conconstitutive social and cultural formations that have played a fundamental part in determining the boundaries of belonging of the United States. In this course, students will interrogate when, why and how race/ethnicity and religion have been used to delineate borders, determine citizenship, navigate legal classifications, dictate social mobility, and regulate economic possibilities. We will analyze both primary sources #such as sermons, reality TV shows, court cases and graphic images#as well as scholarly writing to explore how formations of race and religion have shaped notions of belonging in the US nation#state, thereby constructing the boundaries of the state itself. Cross-listed with ETST 4030, ETST 5030, RLST 5030, HIST 4209 and HIST 5029.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4040 - Psychology of Religion (3 Credits)**

Examines the theories developed by some of the great names in the field of psychology and their approaches to religion. Questions addressed include why people become religious, how religion functions in their lives, religious experience and assessment of the validity of religious claims. Key theorists studied include: William James, Sigmund Freud, Carl G. Jung, Abraham Maslow and Erich Fromm. Cross-listed with RLST 5040.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4060 - Questioning Religious Belief and Practice: Introduction to Philosophy of Religion (3 Credits)**

Does God exist? Can the existence of God be proved? When is believing on faith acceptable? How or why is there a "problem of evil"? What are the attributes of a "god" and how can they be known, if at all? What is the relation of God to the world we experience? How does morality relate to religious belief and practice? The goal of the course is to broaden and deepen our understanding of key philosophical debates within religious traditions as we study prominent thinkers in the history of philosophy. Cross-listed with HUMN 5600, PHIL 4600, PHIL 5600, RLST 5060, and SSCI 5600.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Summer.

**RLST 4070 - Western Religious Thought (3 Credits)**

Focuses on philosophers and theologians who have contributed to the evolution of the three great religious traditions of the West: Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Targets thinkers from three periods: the ancient or formative era, the medieval era, and the contemporary era. Note: Specific philosophers chosen may vary in different semesters. Cross-listed with PHIL 4710.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 4080 - Eastern Religious Thought (3 Credits)**

Parallels the course in Western religious thought. The great religious traditions of the East, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism, are examined as they are presented in the writings of key philosophical representatives of each tradition. Cross-listed with PHIL 4720.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 4100 - Special Topics in Religion (3 Credits)**

This special topics course allows for a variety of subjects to be explored in different semesters, including such issues as the nature of religious experience, communication with the divine, specific historical themes and events in religion. Repeatable.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Repeatable. Max Credits: 9.

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4152 - Religion & Communication (3 Credits)**

This course focuses on the dynamics between religion, culture, and communication and how these have led to intercultural peace, centuries of war, and/or different visions of belonging. This class addresses these dynamics to improve intercultural dialogue and conflict resolution processes, foregrounding the search for justice. Cross-listed with INTS 4152, COMM 4152, COMM 5152, INTS 5152, and RLST 5152.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 4160 - Mysticism (3 Credits)**

Explores the mystical strains within the world's great religious traditions. Jewish, Christian, and Islamic mystics did not always express the same beliefs and attitudes as mainstream adherents. When mystics are placed side-by-side, amazing similarities appear. One cannot always tell whether a given mystical statement is Hindu, Jewish, Sufi, or Christian. This class examines these mystical traditions, East and West. Cross-listed with RLST 5160.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4300 - Myth and Symbol (3 Credits)**

Approaches the field of classical Greek mythology and religion from the perspective of Jungian archetypal theory. The deities of the ancient Greeks are presented as archetypal patterns with universal correlates elsewhere in world religions. A foundation in C. G. Jung's archetypal theory will be offered to ground the course material. Cross-listed with RLST 5300.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

**RLST 4320 - Spirituality in the Modern World (3 Credits)**

Examines the issue of spiritual currents in the modern world. Joseph Campbell claimed that Western culture long ago lost an active sense of the sacred and that the traditional religions have not been the spiritual center for the vast majority of moderns for centuries. This class looks at the modern spiritual awakening in Shamanism, Eastern thought, the New Age movement, the men's movement, paganism and Goddess religion, and the revival of traditional religious forms in recent decades.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 4340 - The Hero's Journey (3 Credits)

The myth of the hero's journey serves as a metaphor for the vicissitudes life puts each of us through. The hero or her/his represents the ego-self who undertakes the journey—a grand adventure into the realm of the unknown—to seek the treasure. He or she is greatly transformed by the process, ultimately into the great self, who wins the boon to share with all humanity. Versions of the story are found all over the world, such as in the sagas of Gilgamesh, Odysseus, Psyche, King Arthur, Dorothy of Oz, and Luke Skywalker from a galaxy far, far, away.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 4360 - Freudian and Jungian Perspectives in Dream Analysis (3 Credits)

Focuses on the phenomenon of dreams in a way that differs distinctly from the traditional approach to the subject in the field of psychology. "Spiritual" approaches to dreams are examined, as well as some major theorists on dreams, especially the work of Sigmund Freud and C. G. Jung. Cross-listed with RLST 5360.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

## RLST 4400 - Differing Concepts of God (3 Credits)

God, Gods, and Goddesses have been imagined in many different modes, forms, aspects, and guises throughout human history. This course investigates Paleolithic models of God, the Great Goddess of the Neolithic era, the Gods of mythological traditions, Biblical God, the abstract God of the philosophers, the God of the pantheists, the deists, and the God of the mystics. Cross-listed with RLST 5400, PHIL 4650 and 5655.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

## RLST 4420 - Goddess Traditions (3 Credits)

Explores the many forms which Goddesses have assumed through history, including the Neolithic Great Mother and her heiresses in the ancient Mediterranean cultures, such as: Isis, Ishtar, Demeter, Hecate, Aphrodite, Artemis, Athena and others, and their parallels in India. Goddess traditions have encompassed a full spectrum from virgins to Great Mothers to dark underworld Goddesses of death and destruction. Cross-listed with RLST 5420 and WGST 4420/5420.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

## RLST 4440 - Concepts of the Soul (3 Credits)

Asks the questions: What is the nature of the human being? What makes us "human?" Do humans have a "soul?" What is its nature? Is it different from the "spirit?" What is its ultimate fate? Examines the various theories put forward by philosophers of both Eastern and Western traditions. Cross-listed with RLST 5440 and PHIL 4470, 5470.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

## RLST 4460 - Death and Concepts of Afterlife (3 Credits)

Examines how the major religious traditions approach the issue of death. Where the Egyptians were fascinated by death, their Mesopotamian and Hebrew neighbors saw no kind of experience continuing after death. Concepts of the Final Judgment Day and the end of the world follow in Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam, while Indian religions developed a sophisticated theory of reincarnation and the "art of dying." Finally, we will turn to Chinese belief in ancestral spirits. Cross-listed with RLST 5460.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

## RLST 4462 - Islam in Modern History (3 Credits)

This course studies Islamic thought and practice over the last two centuries in terms of major historical processes that have operated at local, national, and global scales. Cross-listed with RLST 5462, HIST 4462, HIST 5462.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 4480 - Perspectives on Good and Evil (3 Credits)

Examines the "problem of evil" as formulated in the philosophical tradition. Presents classical formulation of the problem, traditional solutions & classical critiques of each answer. Considers perspectives of various religious orientations, which deal differently with the question of suffering. Cross-listed with PHIL 4480, RLST 5480

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Fall.

## RLST 4500 - Religion and Politics (3 Credits)

Exploration of: (1) theoretical perspectives on the relationship between religion and politics; (2) causes of and justifications for the historical development of the Western separation of "church and state;" (3) contemporary responses to and analyses of this separation; and (4) several current debates about public policy in America that reveal tensions between these two spheres. Cross-listed with PSCI 4057, 5057 and RLST 5500.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 4710 - Women and Religion (3 Credits)

A sociological exploration of the contemporary roles of women in religion. Course examines American and world religious groups with an eye to women's involvement. Considers how women have changed these traditions as they take on leadership roles and discusses the tensions that arise within these traditions as a result of their expanded participation. Cross-listed with HUMN 5710, SSCI 4710/5710, WGST 4710/5710, RLST 5710.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

## RLST 4730 - Whores and Saints: Medieval Women (3 Credits)

Studies how women are presented in texts, as well as works by women. Investigates the roles open to women and societal attitudes toward women, who were considered seductresses, saints, scholars and warriors in the middle ages. This course assumes that students have completed at least 9 hours of literature coursework. Cross-listed with ENGL 4510/5510, RLST 5730 and WGST 4510/5510.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

## RLST 4840 - Independent Study: RLST (1-3 Credits)

Various topics in religious studies pursued in independent research. Note: Students must submit a special processing form completely filled out and signed by the student and faculty member, describing the course expectations, assignments and outcomes, to the CLAS undergraduate advising office for approval. Repeatable.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Repeatable. Max Credits: 3.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer.

## RLST 4850 - Family Systems Therapy, Religion and Spirituality (3 Credits)

This course examines how the intersection between different religious and spiritual frameworks affects family systems. A strengths-based ecological perspective, family therapy theories and family systems theories will be used to understand religious and spiritual frameworks in working with families in schools and communities. Cross-listed with HDFR 4850.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

**RLST 4880 - Directed Research (1-6 Credits)**

Students will engage in original research projects supervised and mentored by faculty. Students must work with faculty prior to registration to develop a proposal for their project and receive permission to take this course. Note: Students must submit a special processing form completely filled out and signed by the student and faculty member, describing the course expectations, assignments and outcomes, to the CLAS undergraduate advising office for approval. Repeatable.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Repeatable. Max Credits: 6.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer.