

RELIGIOUS STUDIES

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Overview

An undergraduate minor is offered in Religious Studies, a discipline that overlaps with many other fields of study: anthropology, literature, philosophy, psychology and others. Religion has played a vital role in history and continues to do so in contemporary life. The degree of interaction between a religious tradition and its host society is profound. Knowledge of its religion(s) is essential for a genuine understanding of each culture. Students will study the nature of the belief systems of the world's great religious traditions. Specific courses will offer the possibility of focusing one's studies in the areas of ancient myth and shamanic traditions, Judaic and Christian studies, Islam, Asian religions, psychology of religion, philosophy of religion, anthropology and sociology of religion, religion and literature and biblical studies.

These program requirements are subject to periodic revision by the academic department, and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences reserves the right to make exceptions and substitutions as judged necessary in individual cases. Therefore, the College strongly urges students to consult regularly with their major, minor and CLAS advisors to confirm the best plans of study before finalizing them.

Click here (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor/>) to learn about the requirements for the Minor in Religious Studies.

Programs Offered

- Religious Studies Minor (<http://catalog.ucdenver.edu/cu-denver/undergraduate/schools-colleges-departments/college-liberal-arts-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor/>)

Faculty

Professors:

Robert Metcalf (Philosophy)

Associate Professors:

Colleen Donnelly (English)

Sarah Hagelin (English)

Rachel Harding (Ethnic Studies)

Assistant Professors:

Dale Stahl (History)

Katherine Mohrman (Ethnic Studies)

Instructors:

Kari Alexander (Sociology)

Bassem Hassan (Political Science)

Daryl Mehring (Philosophy)

Richard Smith (History)

Lecturers:

Mary DeForest (Modern Languages)

AnnMarie Bridges (Religious Studies)

Albert McClure (Religious Studies)

Stephanie Yuhás (Religious Studies)

Religious Studies (RLST)

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. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Max hours: 3 Credits. 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. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Max hours: 3 Credits. 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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: 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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall, spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall, spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Additional Information: Denver Core Requirement, Cultural Diversity.

Typically Offered: 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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Prereq: Junior or Senior standing or permission from instructor. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Typically Offered: Spring.

RLST 4060 - Philosophy of Religion (3 Credits)

Nature of religion and methods of studying it. Cross-listed with HUMN 5600, PHIL 4600, 5600, RLST 5060, and SSCI 5600. Term offered: summer. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Repeatable. Max hours: 9 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Repeatable. Max Credits: 9.

Typically Offered: Spring.

RLST 4152 - Religion & Communication (3 Credits)

This course focuses on the relational/coconstitutive dynamics between religion, culture, and communication and how that shapes the world in which people live; how the legacy of political religious conflict, in conjunction with international culture wars, instigate socio-cultural conflict and change; and how an in-depth study of the dynamics of religion, culture, and communication can improve intergroup/intercultural/international relations or even negotiation/conflict resolution processes. Students will develop capacity to critically analyze the socio-cultural and political implication of religious ideology (radical and moderate), ways in which these ideologies are performed and communicated, and their (students') agency/ability to contribute to intercultural/international understanding, conflict resolution, civic engagement, and/or social justice efforts. In addition, upon completion, students should be prepared to engage in complex conversations about the idea of religion, it's role and relevance in human lives, and recognize several commonalities and differences between their (students') and non-Western/other societies' worldviews, cultures, and communicative dynamics. We will engage these topics through multiple and diverse readings, examples from television, film, and social media, reflexive writing assignments, research and analytical activities, critical discussions, and experiential learning activities. Cross-listed with INTS 4152, COMM 4152, COMM 5152, INTS 5152, and RLST 5152. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max Hours: 3 Credits.

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 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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

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

Examines "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 4480/5480, RLST 5480. Term offered: fall. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: spring. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Repeatable. Max Hours: 3 Credits.

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. Max hours: 3 Credits.

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. Term offered: fall, spring, summer. Repeatable. Max hours: 6 Credits.

Grading Basis: Letter Grade

Repeatable. Max Credits: 6.

Typically Offered: Fall, Spring, Summer.