

RELIGION

Professors Farthing and McDaniel (chair)

Associate Professor Harris

Assistant Professor Flannery-Dailey

RELIGION MAJOR

At least ten courses in religion, including

RELI 110 *Religion in a Global Context*

and

RELI 497 *Senior Colloquium*

and at least one course from three of the following categories:

A. World Religions

RELI 210 *Native American Religions*

RELI 216 *Judaism*

RELI 220 *Advanced Studies in World Religions*

RELI 311 *Buddhism*

RELI 340 *World Religions: Contemporary Perspectives*

B. Biblical Studies

RELI 123 *Introduction to Hebrew Bible*

RELI 124 *Introduction to New Testament*

RELI 240 *Biblical Archaeology*

RELI 250 *Hebrew Prophecy and Wisdom*

RELI 300 *Dead Sea Scrolls and Apocrypha*

RELI 305 *Search for the Historical Jesus*

C. Christianity

RELI 229 *Varieties of Early Christianity*

RELI 230 *Western Christianity to 1500*

RELI 231 *Western Christianity since 1500*

RELI 336 *John Wesley and Methodism*

RELI 356 *Christian Theology: Contemporary Perspectives*

RELI 375 *Orthodoxy and Catholicism*

RELI 430 *Medieval Religion*

D. American Religion

- RELI 145 *History of Religion in America*
- RELI 343 *Religion in Contemporary American Culture*
- RELI 360 *African American Religion*

E. Theology and Philosophy of Religion

- RELI 346 *Modern Christian Theology, 1799-1968*
- RELI 370 *Philosophy of Religion*
- RELI 390 *Advanced Studies in Contemporary Religious Thought*
- RELI 420 *Death and Eternal Life*

F. Religion and Culture

- RELI 200 *State of the World*
- RELI 266 *Religion and Literature*
- RELI 315 *Advanced Studies in Religion and Culture*
- RELI 330 *Women and Religion*

PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION MAJOR

A total of ten courses in philosophy and religion to include

- no fewer than four courses in philosophy
- two must be chosen from
 - PHIL 285 *Plato and Aristotle*
 - PHIL 295 *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Philosophy*
 - PHIL 300 *Nineteenth Century Philosophy*
- No fewer than four courses in religion
- PHIL 370/RELI 370 *Philosophy of Religion*
- PHIL 497 *Senior Thesis* **or** RELI 497 *Senior Seminar*
- at least four other courses 200-level or above.

Philosophy and Religion majors cannot major or minor in either philosophy or religion.

Senior Capstone Experience

At the heart of the Senior Capstone Experience is the course RELI 497 Senior Colloquium, which will involve all senior Religion majors and Philosophy and Religion majors who elect to take the course, as well as Religion minors who choose this course. The Senior Capstone Experience will address the following learning goals:

To understand various theories of religion, as a way of achieving goal one.

To stimulate thoughtful inquiry and lively discussion on a range of religious issues of interest to us.

To learn research methods and tools for sifting information and to apply these methods in a senior research project.

To write well, speak well, and think critically.

MINOR

The Minor in Religion consists of six (6) religion courses, including three (3) at the 300-400-level.

General Courses

RELI 110 *Religion in a Global Context (VA)*

A survey of the basic perspectives and practices of indigenous religions, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

RELI 490 *Topics in Religion*

Intensive analysis of important topics in theological, historical, and biblical studies. Topics will be determined in light of student interest and faculty expertise. *Prerequisite: junior standing and two courses in religion or instructor's consent.*

RELI 497 *Senior Colloquium (W2)*

A course designed to synthesize studies undertaken in the field of religion. Selected readings in the area of biblical interpretation, religious history, the history of Christian thought, theology, and world religions. Required of all religion majors. Open to nonmajors by departmental consent.

A. World Religions Courses

RELI 210-A *Native American Religions (VA)*

A journey into the religious worlds of the first Americans to find how religion and life coalesced and how the distinctive ways of life of the various tribes produced diverse religious traditions, which were connected by common perceptions of the humans' relationships to the world and to each other. In depth study of selected tribes from a variety of geographic regions will promote an understanding of how the relationship of a people to a place shapes their worldview and way of life.

RELI 216-A *Judaism (VA)*

An exploration of contemporary forms of Jewish beliefs, practices, thought, and culture. Emphasis is on the ideas and texture of the worldwide Jewish experience in Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist Judaism, as well as Kabbalah. This course is a deepening and expansion of ideas introduced in RELI 110, which is recommended as a prerequisite, but not required.

RELI 220-A *Advanced Studies in World Religions (VA)*

A focused study of one religious tradition with the aim of acquiring a deeper understanding of its worldview, beliefs, practices, values, and spirituality. Among the religions that will be examined in depth on an alternating basis are: Chinese Religions (Taoism, Confucianism, and Chinese Buddhism), Hinduism, and Islam. May be taken more than once as topics vary.

RELI 311-A *Buddhism (VA)*

An exploration of varieties of Buddhism thought and practice, with particular focus on Zen Buddhism. Includes discussion of Buddhism as an emerging tradition in North America and occasional experiments in Buddhist meditation. This course is a deepening and expansion of ideas introduced in RELI 110, which is recommended but not required as a prerequisite.

RELI 340-A *World Religions: Contemporary Perspectives*

This course introduces students to some of the best of contemporary religious writers from the various world religions. Represented perspectives include Buddhist, Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, Taoist, Confucian, and Native American points of view. In the context of reading their works, various topics are addressed, including (1) the nature of mystical

experience; (2) the possibility of life-after-death; (3) the meaning of life, and (4) the responsibility for protecting people, animals, and the earth. *Prerequisite: RELI 110 or one upper-level course in a world religion other than Christianity.*

B. Biblical Studies Courses

RELI 123-B *Introduction to Hebrew Bible* (LS, HP)

An introduction to the major texts, themes, and history of the Hebrew Bible or Old Testament that employs tools of modern biblical scholarship. The course examines biblical texts in light of the history and culture of ancient Israel and the Ancient Near East, particularly Mesopotamia and Egypt and also features Jewish and Christian histories of interpretation of selected texts.

RELI 124-B *Introduction to the New Testament* (LS)

An introduction to the texts of the New Testament, with emphasis on historical contexts and methodologies of modern biblical scholarship. The course attempts to immerse students in the experience of the original audience of the New Testament, insofar as that is possible, and therefore includes the student of varieties of early Christianity, Judaism, and Greco-Roman religions.

RELI 240-B *Biblical Archaeology* (SB)

A survey of the methods, results, interpretations, and significance of biblical archaeology. The course considers several archaeological sites throughout Israel, including Megiddo, Masada, Jerusalem, Hazor, Qururan, and Bethsaida and considers the impact of archaeology on our understanding of the Bible. The lab component of the course introduces students to pottery reading and restoration, excavation methods, and mapping and surveying. Students who are unable to fulfill the physical requirements of the lab should speak with the instructor prior to enrolling, as alternate arrangements can be made. The optional summer program, "Hendrix in Israel," is recommended but not required and may be used to fulfill a portion of the research component of the course with the prior approval of the instructor.

RELI 250-B *Hebrew Prophecy and Wisdom* (LS, VA)

A historical, theological, and sociological analysis of the biblical prophets and of the wisdom literature, including Job, Ecclesiastes, and Proverbs. The course has two major foci: 1) an exploration of the messages of the

classical prophets and their relevance to ancient and contemporary issues of social justice and 2) an analysis of the prophets' experience through an understanding of their practices, rituals, writings, and socio-cultural roles.

RELI 300-B *Dead Sea Scrolls and Apocrypha* (LS)

A historical and literary survey of Judaism from the close of the Hebrew Bible to the Mishnah, including the Dead Sea Scrolls, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha. The course investigates the diverse forms of Second Temple Judaism, which preceded and influenced both early Christianity and rabbinic Judaism. Special emphasis is placed on understanding the archaeological and literary remains of the Dead Sea Scroll caves and Qumran community.

RELI 305-B *Search for the Historical Jesus* (HP, LS)

An examination of the current state of research into the question of the historical Jesus, variously characterized as Gnostic sage, apocalyptic prophet, ascetic, rabbi, Greco-Roman philosopher, magician, mystic, or Jewish messiah. The investigation applies literary critical methods to canonical and non-canonical texts and also uses each characterization of Jesus as a window into a specific construct of the history of the first centuries of the common era.

C. Christianity Courses

RELI 229-C *Varieties of Early Christianity* (HP, LS)

An exploration of the varieties of first and second century Christianity and the battle for apostolic authority. The course examines the history and thought of early Christianity as attested in the canonical writings, particularly the Gospels, Paul and Revelation, as well as in numerous non-canonical texts, such as the Gospel of Thomas, Gnostic collections, Montanist writings, and the Valentinian corpus.

RELI 230-C *Western Christianity To 1500* (HP, VA, W2)

The development of Christian thought and institutions from the Apostolic Fathers to the late Middle Ages, with special emphasis on the interaction between the religious and secular dimensions of Western culture.

RELI 231-C *Western Christianity Since 1500* (HP, VA, W2)

A continuation of Western Christianity to 1500, with special emphasis on the Protestant Reformation, the Wesleyan movement, and recent developments in Roman Catholic and Protestant thought.

RELI 336-C *John Wesley and Methodism* (VA, W2)

An examination of pivotal themes in the religious thought of John Wesley (against the background of the Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox traditions that informed his own theology), followed by a survey of the development of Wesleyan religion in America, with special emphasis on questions of ecumenism, social justice, Methodist responses to trends in Western culture (science, democracy, liberation) during the 19th and 20th centuries.

RELI 356-C *Christian Theology: Contemporary Perspectives*

This course examines selected options within contemporary Christian thought that have emerged since 1965. Kinds of Christian thinking include (1) process theology; (2) ecological theology; (3) feminist theology; (4) African-American theology; (5) Native American theology; (6) Asian American theology; (7) Asian theology; (8) African theology; (9) Latin American theology; and (10) theologies that are shaped from, and out of, dialogue with other world religions, including the Christian dialogues with Judaism and Buddhism.

RELI 375-C *Orthodoxy and Catholicism* (VA, W2)

A survey of central themes in the history, beliefs, and practices of Greek Orthodoxy and Roman Catholicism, followed by a consideration of critical issues facing Orthodoxy and Catholicism in the contemporary world.

RELI 430-C *Medieval Religion* (VA, W2)

A study of the religious dimension of medieval European culture as experienced “from below,” i.e., by laypeople who were not directly involved in formal academic discussion of theological questions. Topics will include mysticism, women’s spirituality, relics, crusades, saints, heretics, and attitudes toward food, sexuality, and the body. Prerequisite: junior standing.

D. American Religion Courses

RELI 145-D *History of Religion in America* (HP,VA)

Historical survey of some of America’s diverse religious traditions, including selected Native American religions. The course examines the historical development of significant denominations of Christianity and Judaism and considers the effects of the American context on religions such as Buddhism and Islam, which contribute to America’s religious

pluralism. A key question will be “How has religion shaped the history, culture, and sense of place of the American people?”

RELI 343-D *Religion in Contemporary American Culture* (W2)

An attempt to understand and to analyze what contemporary social institutions, the arts, politics, and philosophy reveal about Americans' religious experiences and their religious perceptions especially with respect to the nature of human life and of the world in which they live.

RELI 360-D *African American Religion* (CW, VA, W2)

An analysis of the role of religion in the African-American community, along with a survey of key themes in the religious thought of African-Americans from the ante-bellum period to the present, giving special attention to the perspectives of Martin Luther King, Jr., Howard Thurman, James Cone, and Malcolm X. *Prerequisites: Junior standing.*

E. Theology and Philosophy of Religion Courses

RELI 346-E *Modern Christian Theology, 1799-1968* (VA)

A survey of pivotal developments in the history of Christian theology in the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries: Protestant Liberalism, the Social Gospel, and Neo-Orthodoxy will be approached through close analysis of the writings of Friederick Schleiermacher, Adolf von Harnack, Walter Rauschenbusch, Karl Barth, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Reinhold Niebuhr, H. Richard Niebuhr, Rudolf Bultmann, and Paul Tillich, among others.

RELI 370-E *Philosophy of Religion* (VA)

Study and evaluation of classical and contemporary arguments regarding such issues as the nature and existence of God, the nature of religious faith and its relationship to reason, the meaning of religious language, and the relationship between religion and morality. Cross-listed as PHIL 370.

RELI 390-E *Advanced Studies in Contemporary Religious Thought* (VA)

This course examines issues and perspectives in contemporary theology and philosophy as they appear in such topics as religion and science, religion and psychology, the philosophy of Whitehead and process thought. May be taken more than once as topics vary.

RELI 420-E *Death and Eternal Life* (VA, W2)

An examination of the significance of mortality and visions of life beyond death in a variety of religious traditions. The meaning of death and the

hope for immortality will be explored in relation to a wide range of perspectives, from an acceptance of death as part of human finitude to religious visions of heaven, hell, purgatory, and reincarnation. *Prerequisite: junior standing.*

F. Religion and Culture Courses

RELI 200-F *State of the World* (CW)

This course has three aims. The first is to consider problems of environment, poverty, hunger, violence, and the gap between rich and poor. The course begins with a weekend retreat at the Heifer Project International ranch in Perryville, Arkansas, amid which students undergo the “global village overnight” experience and learn about the philosophy and work of HPI. Students taking the course should be prepared to spend the first weekend at the HPI ranch. Second, the course is an introduction to contemporary religious responses to the “state of the world,” with special attention to spiritual resources offered by the world religions that might help people make constructive differences in the world. Third, the course is a service-learning course, in which the student is required to undertake five hours of volunteer service a week, in order to learn-while-doing.

RELI 266-F *Religion and Literature* (LS, VA, W2)

An exploration of selected fiction, poetry, and certain kinds of nonfiction, such as autobiography and biography, to discern how the artist portrays spiritual experiences and perceptions. Literature from ancient times to the present will be considered. *Prerequisite: any course carrying the LS code or permission of the instructor.*

RELI 315-F *Advanced Studies in Religion and Culture* (VA)

To examine the relationships of religion to cultural phenomena, this course will focus on one selected topic and will investigate how cultural forces both shape and reveal the attitudes and perceptions about religion and spirituality. The areas that will be explored are religion and film, religion and politics, apocalyptic thought, and religion in the American South. May be taken more than once as topics vary.

RELI 330-F *Women and Religion* (CW)

An examination of assumptions about women’s roles in the world’s religious traditions, with attention to changing roles of women and men, women’s spiritual experiences, and new forms of women’s religious expression.