

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES (RES)

---

## RES 101 Introduction to the Study of Religion (3 credits)

This course is an introduction to the central themes of both Eastern and Western religious thought. The course presentation emerges from the comparative study of religions, their sources, traditions, and multiple manifestations.

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Fall, Spring, and Summer. PLV: Fall and Spring.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 106 Religions of the Globe (3 credits)

The course is a study of the major religious systems of the globe and the formative influences they have on human culture. Consideration will be given to Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Fall, Spring, and Summer. PLV: Fall and Spring.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 106C Religions of the Globe (CAP) (3 credits)

The course is a study of the major religious systems of the globe and the formative influences they have on human culture. Consideration will be given to Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam.

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Fall, Spring, and Summer. PLV: Fall and Spring.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 201 Great Ideas in Western Religious Thought (3 credits)

The great ideas of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. An in-depth study of the most influential ideas regarding the nature of divinity and the essence of humanity which emerge from the different source documents and traditions of the major religions of the West. 3 Credits

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Spring. PLV: Fall.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 202 Great Ideas in Eastern Religious Thought (3 credits)

This course examines the great ideas in Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. An in-depth study of the most influential ideas regarding the nature of divinity and the essence of humanity that emerge from the different source documents and traditions of the major religions of the East.

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Fall. PLV: Spring.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 231 The Bible: Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) (3 credits)

An introduction to the history, literature, and religion of the Ancient Hebrews as it grew in the cultural frame-work of the ancient Near East. Attention will be given to the formation, development, and major themes of the Pentateuch, as well as the historical, prophetic, poetical and wisdom books of the Bible.

**Course Rotation:** Fall.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 232 The Bible: Christian Scriptures (New Testament) (0-3 credits)

An introduction to the history, literature, and religion of the early Christian community as it grew in the cultural frame-work of the Jewish and Greco/Roman world of the first century. Attention will be given to the formation, development and major themes of the Gospels, Epistles, and the Apocalypse.

**Course Rotation:** Spring.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

## RES 240 The World Religions and the Natural Environment (3 credits)

This course will examine the teachings of the world's major religious traditions about the natural environment and the place of human beings within it. This will include consideration of Eastern and Western beliefs about cosmology (the question of what the universe is and, from a religious perspective, what relationship it may have to God), as well as of beliefs and practices regarding the natural environment of indigenous and aboriginal religious traditions. We will consider different religious discussions about human moral responsibility toward nature, including responsibilities toward other people, toward other species, and toward the universe in general. We will also examine the response of contemporary religious thinkers and institutions to the environmental concerns that have arisen in recent decades. The purpose will be twofold: to develop a better understanding of the religious traditions by studying them from an environmental perspective, and to develop a better understanding of environmental attitudes and ideas by studying them from the perspective of their relation to religious teaching.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 242 The Divine Comedy of Dante (3 credits)**

This course is a study of the Divine Comedy of Dante Alighieri (1265-1321) with an eye to its major philosophic and religious ideas. As Dante travels through the realms of Hell, Purgatory, and Heaven, the *Commedia* integrates into its verses the intellectual traditions of Classical Greek, Biblical, and Medieval Philosophical thought. These traditions will be considered in order to understand the work's essential claims regarding the Divine, the human, the nature of virtue and vice, and the meaning, purpose, and order of existence.

**Course Rotation:** Fall;NY:PLV

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 244 The Gospels of The New Testament (3 credits)**

This course offers a scholarly introduction to the Gospels of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John with an approach that seeks to situate these texts within their original historical, literary, and religious contexts. Through a comparison of the four Gospels the themes that distinguish each book regarding its portrait of Jesus and the demands of the Christian life will be studied. Attention to the sources, audiences, the nature of multiple forms of oral communication within the written texts, and the perspective of each author will be emphasized.

**Course Rotation:** Fall;NYC:PLV

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 260 The Religion of Islam (3 credits)**

This class will engage in a comprehensive study of the religion of Islam, beginning with the life and teachings of the Prophet Muhammad. Students will study the early history of Islam in the Arabian Peninsula, its expansion in the seventh and eighth centuries, and have an overview of the history of the Caliphate, the various Islamic dynasties up to the end of the Ottoman Empire. Students will read the Quran in it's entirety in a recent translation, and be introduced to the other major genres of Islamic religious literature, such as the Hadith. The class will also have an overview of Islamic art, since it is impossible to separate the great achievements of Islamic art from the religion itself, and since Islamic art has had such an enormous impact on the art of other civilizations.

**Course Rotation:** NY;Fall

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 262 Buddhism (3 credits)**

Buddhism, the fourth largest religion in the world in terms of believers, was founded by Siddhartha Gautama Shakyamuni, the Buddha, in the 6th century BCE. This course will examine the Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana schools, each within the context of its historical, ethical, linguistics, and theological roots, within India, Sri Lanka and Southeast Asia. Tibet, Mongolia, Japan, China and Korea, as well as within the Western world, where Buddhist schools have made major inroads and continue to exert large-scale influence in popular culture, religious developments, art and literature. We will draw attention to the extraordinary religious and cultural innovations that Buddhism has made to world culture, including yoga and techniques of meditation, and major aspects of Tibetan Buddhism

**Course Rotation:** NY; Fall

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296 Topics in Religious Studies (3 credits)**

Topics vary from year to year but provide an opportunity to examine either the work of an author, issue or a specific problem in the field of religious studies.

**Course Rotation:** TBA.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296D Topic: Women in World Religions (3 credits)**

This course is a study of the roles women have played and the impact they have had, both historically and in the contemporary world, in the major religious systems of the globe. The formative influences these religions have had on human culture in general as well as on the place of the women in their respective societies will be examined. Consideration will be given to the major world religions, East and West.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296G Topic: The Gospel, Letters, and Revelations of St. John in the Christian Scriptures (New Testament) (3 credits)**

In the New Testament under the name of John there appears a Gospel, three letters and the Book of Revelation. This course using the insights of modern biblical scholarship will explore these documents with an eye to their major themes, audience, sources historical and literary contexts.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296T Topic: The Gospel of St. Luke and the Acts of the Apostles (3 credits)**

Within the Christian Scriptures (The New Testament) the writings of St. Luke; his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, represent the single largest block of material from the pen of a single author. This course will study these two most influential documents from the perspective of modern critical Biblical scholarship with an eye to understanding of their sources, audience, context, and major themes. The aim of the course is to introduce the student to a scholarly study of the Bible which aims at a sophisticated approach to an understanding of the text. No previous study of the source documents of Christianity is required not assumed.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296U From the Mysteries to Gnosticism & Beyond: Mediterranean & Middle Eastern Religions in Late Antiquity (3 credits)**

This course will introduce students to the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern religious situation from the time of Alexander the Great to approximately the time of Emperor Justinian (527-565 CE). Students will examine the influence of the Greco-Oriental mystery traditions, then the Oriental/Asian religious influences that were introduced into Western religious traditions such as Judaism and Christianity, as part of the legacy of Alexander the Great. These combined influences crystallized into Gnosticism, Manichaeism, Mandaeism, Hermeticism, and other religious doctrines and movements, which will form a central portion of the course.

**Course Rotation:** NY: Fall, odd years.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296W Topics: The History, Beliefs and Practices of Christianity (3 credits)**

This course is designed to provide an introduction to the history, beliefs and practices of Christianity. Special attention will be paid to Christianity in its contemporary context as a global religion. The organization of the semester will be historical. By locating Christianity in its historical and cultural contexts, we will be able to ask, throughout the class, what have been the continuities in Christian belief and practice, and what has changed over the centuries? How have Christians responded to new contexts, new pressures, and new privileges through history? In the focus on global Christianity, we will consider how Christians have adapted to quite different cultural contexts and how Christians in very different positions of political power have responded to the great issues of the modern world.

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Fall.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 296X Topic: Religion and Psychedelics (3 credits)**

This course examines the relationship between religion and substances classed as "psychedelic" or "entheogenic." The relationship will be analyzed historically and philosophically, taking into account the role these substances have played in different traditions, the history of these substances under colonial regimes and post-colonial regimes, the philosophical issues raised by such substances, and the politics of their adoption, appropriation, and use in modern cultural contexts, including psychotherapeutic research. Throughout, attention will be paid to the various and diverse values attributed to these substances and the mental states they produce, and how that value is inextricably bound up with ritual structures, lineages of authority, and conceptual presuppositions about mind, human life, and human flourishing. Course Rotation: NYC: Spring

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.

**RES 312 Advanced Buddhist Studies (3 credits)**

This class will examine the history of Buddhist forms of thought and engagement. We will focus specifically on Buddhist understandings of personal transformation—what it really is and should be, how it takes place, how it is depicted, why it is desirable, and under what circumstances it can happen. We will look both at ancient understandings of these questions within the Buddhist tradition, and at modern interpretations of them, from a variety of sources: scripture, poetry, philosophy, and ethnography. We will also look at contemporary attempts to extract aspects of Buddhist practice from their religious context and use them for the purposes of mental health, "wellness," social justice, or environmental justice. Throughout, we will keep in mind the question of what constitutes a tradition, and what happens when traditional forms and ideas change or are changed in history, in order to arrive at more nuanced understandings of Buddhism, Buddhist culture, and authenticity. Prior coursework in Buddhism or Eastern Traditions is a requirement.

**Course Rotation:** NYC: Fall, Even Years

**Prerequisites:** RES 202 with minimum grade of D, INT 196J with minimum grade of D, and RES 262 with minimum grade of D.

**RES 395 Independent Study in Religious Studies (1-9 credits)**

With the approval of the appropriate faculty member, the department chairperson, and the academic dean, students may select a topic for guided research that is not included in the regular course offerings. The student meets regularly with the faculty member to review progress. A research project or paper must also be submitted. Restrictions/Requirements: Junior standing and a minimum CPQA of 3.00.

**Course Rotation:** PLV: Fall, Spring, Summer.

**Prerequisites:** This course does not have a prerequisite.