# Spring 2023 Undergraduate Courses

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<th>Important Dates</th>
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<td>January 9</td>
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<td>Holidays:</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Luther King, Jr., Day</td>
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<td>January 17</td>
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<tr>
<td>Last day to add, drop with no grade</td>
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<td>January 17</td>
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<td>Deadline to apply for May 2023 graduation</td>
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<td>March 6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Spring recess No classes</td>
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<td>Feb. 27—Mar. 4</td>
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<td>Last day to withdraw from course; grade subject to Withdrawal Policy</td>
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<td>March 20</td>
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<td>Registration for Summer and Fall 2023 begins</td>
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## RELS 1200 (001-008)

**World Religions**

*T 1:00-2:15 / Breakouts Thurs. 8:30, 11:30, 1:00, 2:30 (001-004); R 1:00-2:15 / Breakouts Tues. 8:30, 11:30, 2:30, 4:00 (005-008)*

/ Tina Katsanos

Understanding the news, deciphering memes, working with diverse groups of people, and analyzing history, politics, and ethics all require a grasp of the diversity of religions across the world. We will learn about a wide range of practices and concepts identified as “religion” while using that knowledge in weekly problem-based discussion sections.

- **Cultural or Historical Analysis**

## RELS 1201-001

**Intro to Religion**

*MW (F-Hybrid) 12:20-1:10 / Janet McDaniel*

Introduction to the academic study of religion. Whether one holds religious beliefs or not we are all living in historical, cultural, and social worlds that are largely constructed by religious ideas and assumptions. In this course we dig deeply to ask about the kind of “world constructions” that religions represent, examining the origins of our most basic assumptions about the meaning of life, gender and sexuality, moral values, and cultural and social norms. This is an introductory course intended for students of any major or subject area.

- **Cultural or Textual Analysis**

## RELS 2000-002

**Daoism: The Religion and Philosophy of the Way**

*TR 11:30-12:15 / Janna Shedd*

An overview of China’s major indigenous religion from ancient classic texts, such as the divination manual the Yijing (I-ching) and the famous Dao De Jing, to today’s modern revival of temple festivals and monastic life. We will explore Chinese Daoist culture, major historical developments, ritual practices, and the figures of myth and magic. Our learning emphasis will be on developing practical familiarity with ideas, symbols, and people commonly seen throughout China and now increasingly in Western popular culture.

- **Textual or Cultural Analysis**

## RELS 2000-005

**New Religions and Cult Controversies**

*TR 11:30-12:15 / Sean McCloud (Cross-listed with AMST 2050)*

New religions are a constant in American history. But why do some groups receive a lot of attention and others get ignored? What do people mean when they use terms such as “cult,” and “brainwashing” and where do these words come from? In this class we study a selection of new religions and spiritualities, including Wicca, Spiritualism, Heaven’s Gate, Peoples Temple, Satanism, the Nation of Islam, and the Law of Attraction. And we also study the controversies surrounding some of these groups, asking what kinds of work labels such as “cult” do in contemporary U.S. society.

- **Historical or Textual Analysis**

## RELS 2000-001

**Beyond This World: Fantastic Journeys**

*MW 4:00-5:15 / John Reeves*

An overview of a wide range of early visionary accounts that feature ascents to and tours of heaven, descents to and tours of hell, and journeys to utopia and fabulous lands positioned in regions located at the ends of or on the other side of “our” world.

- **Textual or Historical Analysis**
RELS 2000-006
Religion and Contemporary Horror Film
Online Asynchronous / Haley Twist
In this course we will examine contemporary horror cinema through the lens of religious studies and film theory. Analyzing a selection of films that range from independent to mainstream, we will explore how the (often supernatural) themes found in modern horror cinema approach anxieties about our time. Through the combination of readings along with viewings of films, this course will examine concepts including agency, gender, identity, family trauma, and existential fear.

RELS 2102-001
Introduction to Asian Religions
TR 10:00-11:15 / Janna Shedd
This course is an introduction to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism. We will cover many of the major fundamental concepts, myths, gods, and practices of these religions both in their classical formulations and in their contemporary forms. -Cultural or Textual Analysis

RELS 2105-001
Introduction to the New Testament
Hybrid / Online Asynchronous and Online Synchronous on Fridays 11:15-12:05 / David Clausen
An academic survey of the New Testament writings with a focus on their authorship, dating, and place in our understanding of the emergence of the new religion we now know as Christianity. What do the NT documents reveal about the first followers of Jesus in terms of their historical, cultural, and archaeological contexts, both Jewish and Roman? Textual or Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 2246-001
Jesus on the Silver Screen
TR 2:30-3:45/ Kent Brintnall
(Cross-lists with ENGL/FILM)
Any representation of Jesus is an argument about who Jesus is (or was) and what his life (and death) means. This course consists of a close, comparative reading of canonical and non-canonical gospels as well as a number of cinematic depictions of Jesus to think through how each reflects and responds to their historical, cultural, and political moment.
-Textual or Cultural Analysis

RELS 2600-001
Orientation to the Study of Religion
Thursdays 2:30-5:15 / John Reeves
This course examines basic concepts, theories, and approaches that are involved in the critical, academic study of religion. Attention given to basic research materials and to standard writing practices in the discipline. - Oral Communication and Writing Intensive requirements

RELS 3000-002
Maya Religion and Culture: From the Pre-Classical to the Present
TR 1:00-2:15 / Eric Hoenes
(Cross-listed with LTAM 3002 & ANTH 3020)
This course surveys Maya people's culture and religion from the ancient past to the present. Students will integrate historical, anthropological, archaeological, and literary sources to examine how religious principles that served as the cornerstones of classical Maya civilization (250-900 CE) survived the European invasion in the 16th century and have continued to be sources of meaning and resilience for Maya people in Guatemala, Honduras, and Mexico, as well as in the Maya diaspora to the USA into the 21st century. - Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 3000-003
Ghosts, Demons, Fear, and Conspiracy in American Culture
Online Asynchronous / Sean McCloud (Cross-listed with AMST 3050)
Recent polls show an increasing number of Americans believe in ghosts and demons, have heightened senses of fear, and at least 75% believe in one or more false conspiracy theories. This asynchronous online class analyzes these subjects and various scholarly explanations as to why so many contemporary Americans would embrace clearly false conspiracies and what kinds of work belief in ghosts and demons do in individual lives and the larger culture.
-Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 4600-001
Senior Seminar
TR 4:00-5:15 / Julia Moore
This capstone course for majors develops students' written and spoken communication skills and their ability to critically evaluate the content and form of scholarship broadly centered upon religion. Students learn to apply and synthesize scholarly approaches to new subjects and situations. -Oral and Writing Intensive
RELS 3000-006
Landscapes of Peacebuilding: Christianity, Slavery, and the City of Charlotte
TR 1:00-2:15 / Julia Moore and Matthew Gin
(Cross-lists with AFRS 3050; ARCH 4204; and HIST 3000)
This course examines the history of slavery in Charlotte through its local churches and slave cemeteries. Of particular focus is a series of racially divided Presbyterian Churches in the Charlotte area whose communities and buildings carry forward intertwined histories of race and religion that continue to shape the city today. Lectures explore topics on the history of slavery and Christianity in Mecklenburg County as well as cemetery architecture. Students will work in cross-disciplinary teams with local churches to document and restore historic enslaved burial grounds. This is not a design course but a class about how histories shape buildings, landscapes, and communities. Students may participate in optional field visits to area churches and enslaved burial grounds.

RELS 3113-001
Jesus
Hybrid / Online Asynchronous and Online Synchronous on Fridays 12:20-1:10 / David Clausen
What do we know historically about Jesus and how do we know it? This course will examine all our early sources including textual, cultural, and archaeological, to uncover Jesus in the light of his Jewish background. The emphasis will be on recovering his original teachings and his understanding of himself and his mission based on the latest scholarship and new discoveries. -Cultural or Textual or Historical Analysis

RELS 3115-001
Early Christianity
Hybrid/ Online Asynchronous and Online Synchronous on Fridays 11:15-12:05 / David Clausen
The Christian church has been the most powerful religious, political, social, cultural, economic, and intellectual institution in the history of Western civilization. Yet the Christian movement did not start out as a culturally significant phenomenon; it began in a remote part of the Roman Empire as a small, lower-class group of followers of a Jewish apocalyptic preacher, crucified as an enemy of the state. How did Christianity become the preferred religion of a Roman emperor and grow to embrace an empire? Join us and trace the early centuries of Christianity from Christ to Constantine. -Textual or Cultural Analysis

RELS 3260-001
Buddhism in the Modern World
TR 10:00-11:15 / Alex Kaloyanides
Is Buddhism a philosophy? A mind science? An ancient mystical path? A modern construct? This seminar will explore how Buddhism has been understood in the modern era. Our primary source materials will range from Orientalist poetry to Zen essays to Insight Meditation manuals to 21st-century films as we discuss one of today’s most popular religions. - Cultural or Textual Analysis

RELS 4000-090
Mysticism/ Pornography/ Subjectivity
Tuesdays 5:30-8:15 / Kent Brintnall
(Cross-listed with RELS 5000; ENGL 4050 & 5050; WGST 4050 & 5050; PHIL 4990 & 5050)
Why is it that so many Christian mystics appeal to erotic and sexual language and imagery when trying to describe their most intense and intimate encounters with the Divine? Why is it that so many pornographic authors depict erotic and sexual experience as transcendent and transformative? Why do writers who attempt to record both religious and erotic experience so frequently appeal to the category of the ineffable, the unsaying, the inexpressible? —Textual or Cultural Analysis

RELS 4155-090
Religion and Social Change in Latin America
Thursdays 6:30-9:15 / Eric Hoenes
(Cross-listed with RELS 5000; LTAM 4317 & 5000; ANTH 4020 & 5020)
This course examines the roles that religion has played in the changing social, political, and economic landscape of Latin America since the colonial period. By reading historical and ethnographic case studies we will look at the ways that Catholic, Pentecostal, and mainline Protestant churches have sought to address material and spiritual development throughout the region in the wake of social and political instability. How have varying theological commitments led people individually and collectively to enter the political sphere? In what ways have they supported or challenged revolutionary political movement and authoritarian regimes? How have economic changes impacted people’s religious lives? How has religion shaped experiences of migration, urbanization, and modernization? To what extent have indigenous revitalization and other identity-based social movements drawn on religion in configuring their agendas? -Textual or Cultural Analysis
Western Historical and Cultural Awareness

**LBST 2101-337**
*Back to the Garden: Music Culture and Faith /
MW(F Hybrid) 11:15-12:05 / Janet McDaniel*

This course will introduce you to the interrelatedness between music and religion from a local and global perspective. We’ll explore how music has been a powerful and essential part of religious, cultural, and social experiences. We will also examine how music has been, and continues to be a means to teach, express, reinforce, and sometimes change religious doctrine, cultural belief systems, and identities.

Literature and Culture

**LBST 2212-335**
*Multiculturalism in YA and Children’s Literature /
TR 1:00-2:00 / Trina Rumfelt*

This course will explore a range of genres and forms including picture books, historical and realistic fiction, as well as film and the graphic novel that represents a wealth of cultural, ethnic, religious, political, physical, and social diversity in literature for children and adolescents. We will explore how visual, and verbal texts reveal social constructions of cultural identity; discuss current debates about diversity; and work to develop definitions of what culture, multiculturalism, and diversity mean in the context of children’s and adolescent literature.

Critical Thinking and Communication

**LBST 2301 (335, 337, 338, 339)**
*A Good Life. What Is It? /
Online Asynchronous / Celia Sinclair*

A Good Life: What is it? How does one live it? This particular section of LBST 2301 will deal with the ways in which “a good life” has been understood in Western thought. What is a good life? How is happiness defined and understood? What are the problems we humans must address?

**LBST 2301 (341 & 342)**
*Sustainability & Identity /
TR 10:00-11:15 & 11:30-12:45 / Tina Katsanos*

This course is a study of sustainability as part of the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. It includes an examination of the ethical dimensions of citizenship and sustainability in political, social, and religious contexts. It also includes a critical thinking and communications component which will be used to examine the ways in which citizenship and various religious identities have evolved to include environmental responsibilities. In particular, the class examines the possibilities and limits of sustainability in mitigating environmental degradation and global climate change.

Global and Intercultural Connections

**LBST 2102-335**
*Buddhism Across Borders /
TR 2:30-3:45 / Alex Kaloyanides*

How did Buddhism go from being a local movement in ancient India to one of the world’s most popular religions today? This course will look at the way Buddhist traditions have been preserved and transformed as Buddhism moved into new communities. This course’s sweeping study of Buddhism will give students a new understanding of this religion’s distinct way of engaging new cultures and retaining revered traditions.

**LBST 2102-336 & LBST 2102-337**
*Asian Religions and Culture in Global Media /
MWF 10:10-11:00 & 11:15-12:05 / Janna Shedd*

This course explores a variety of Asian religions and cultures and examines how they are portrayed in global media, such as films, documentaries, music videos, and graphic novels. Students will learn about these religions through visual, stories, and the voices of the people of the cultures themselves — and compare those voices to those of outsiders doing the describing.

**LBST 2102-338**
*Deconstructing Disney /
MW(F Hybrid) 1:25-2:15 / Tabitha Rice*

This course analyzes the representation, reception, and narratives of different religions through Disney characters, soundtracks and films. Films will include Lion King, Princess and the Frog, Moana, and others. Class time is a mixture of lecture, discussion, and film study.

JOIN THE RELIGIOUS STUDIES CLUB

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