

Department of Religious Studies

Fall 2020 Undergraduate Courses

Important Dates

August 24

First day of evening classes

August 31

Last day to add, drop with no grade

September 7

Labor Day
University closed

September 21

Deadline to apply for Dec 2020 graduation

October 12

Spring 2020 schedule available on web

October 12 - 13

Student recess
No classes

October 26

Last day to withdraw from course; grade subject to policy

November 2

Registration for spring 2021 begins

November 25 - 28

Thanksgiving weekend
No classes

December 9

Last day of classes

December 10

Reading day

December 14 - 17

Final examinations

December 18 - 19

Commencement



RELS 1201-001 **Intro to Religion**

TR 10:00-11:15/James Tabor

Religion influences all we think about everything. Whether an individual holds to 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 Historical Analysis*



RELS 1200-001 **Introduction to World Religions**

Online/Prea Persaud

This course reviews the historical origins, central teachings, and devotional practices of some of the world's major religious traditions. Students will analyze the social, political, and cultural factors that come into play in the formation and understanding of religious traditions.

- *Cultural or Historical Analysis*

RELS 2000-002

Religion and Food

MWF 10:10-11:00/Prea Persaud

(Cross-listed with ANTH2020-001 INTL3001-002)

Food has always been an important, although underexplored, element of religion. The study of food can reveal the beliefs, practices, and values a tradition holds dear.

This course explores the relationship between religion and food by examining the role food plays in various religious traditions as well as the construction of food as an ethical category. We will

read religious myths relating to food, discuss food and ritual, the way food is used to shape gender and social roles, and the ways in which food is used as a tool or indicator of morality.

- *Cultural Analysis*



RELS 2000-003

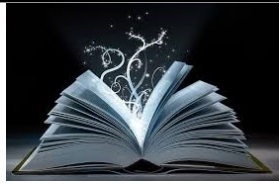
Death and the Afterlife in Asian Religions

MWF 12:20-1:10 (HYBRID) / Janna Shedd

This course is an introduction to religious concepts of death and death-related practices across Asia. Students will explore a wide range of funerary practices; beliefs regarding Otherworlds and rebirth; ghost stories and festivals; and the gods and goddesses of death. Course readings will be assigned weekly and will include a variety of materials including films, images, myths, textbook chapters, and instructor-produced introductions and explanations of topics.

- *Cultural or Textual Analysis*





RELS 2000-004 Magic and Religion

Online / Barbara Thiede

Ancient incantations and adjurations, spells and amulets, magic words, prophecy, divination – in what ways can and do religious practices, ideas and ritual intersect with magic? To answer these questions (or, at least, try to), we'll begin by studying what “religion” and “magic” mean for scholars. Then we'll explore how magic and religion overlap in both ancient and modern societies – including some of our own time.

- Cultural or Historical Analysis



RELS 2000-005 Racism and Religion

MWF 11:15-12:05 (HYBRID) / Danielle Boaz

(Cross-listed with AFRS2050-003 & LEGL 3000-002)

From the burning of three historically black churches in Opelousas, Louisiana to the white supremacist attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand, to the murder of nine people at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina, the last few years have brought countless examples of racially motivated attacks on religious communities. This course will explore the relationship between racism and religion through case studies from the 15th century to the present day. Possible topics include: Christianity and the Atlantic slave trade; the FBI and the Nation of Islam; "Voodoo" and Haitian independence; black church burnings; Black "witches" in 20th century Cuba; the Ku Klux Klan; the racialization of Islam; and Evangelical extremism against African diaspora religions.

- Cultural or Historical Analysis



RELS 2000-006 Resistance as Religious: From the Maccabees to Standing Rock

MWF 12:20-1:10/Tina Katsanos

This course provides a historical overview of resistance actions and movements rooted in religious identities and ideologies. Special attention is paid to the current environmental resistance movements led by religious and non-religious communities who often operate in partnership. We will also explore the religious nature of secular environmental groups.

- Cultural or Historical Analysis

RELS 2000-007 New Religious Movements

Online / Jessica Johnson

This course introduces the study of new religious movements in the United States—groups frequently referred to as “cults,” “sects,” and/or “fringe religions.” We examine definitions of “new religion,” how new religions form, persist, and die out, and the reasons that people join new religions. - Cultural Analysis



RELS 2102-001 Introduction to Asian Religions

MWF 1:25-2:15 (HYBRID) / Janna Shedd

This course is an introduction to Hinduism, Buddhism, and Daoism (Taoism). We will cover many of the major fundamental concerns, myths, gods, and practices of these religions both in their classical formulations and in their contemporary forms.

- Cultural or Historical Analysis



RELS 2104-001 Hebrew Scriptures

Online/Barbara Thiede

There is no such thing as "The Bible." But there is a fascinating story behind the creation of ancient biblical literature. In this class, we will look at the linguistic, historical, and archeological evidence that helps scholars understand who wrote biblical literature and why. We explore the writers' sense of humor and political agendas and discover how later readers reinvented biblical texts. - Textual or Historical Analysis



RELS 2105-001 Introduction to the New Testament

MWF 11:15-12:05/David Clausen

Our earliest written sources about the Christ-faith are contained in the 27 books of the New Testament. We will conduct historical and textual investigations of the gospels, Acts, and the letters of Paul and others in order to reveal the various ways in which they understood the Christ-event. We will consider such questions as: Why are the gospels so similar in some respects and yet so different in others? What are the obstacles for rediscovering the historical Jesus? What was Paul's real message and why was it so often challenged? - Textual or Historical Analysis

RELS 2110-001

Judaism

MW 4:00-5:15 / Barbara Thiede

Jews have defined and redefined what it means to be Jewish for thousands of years. In this course, we will explore the history of the Jewish people in mostly, though not exclusively, European and American contexts, learning how they experienced the world as a tiny and vulnerable nation, as prosperous and thriving minority communities, and as the threatened (and threatening) "other."

- *Historical or Textual Analysis*



RELS 2120-001

Christianity

MW 4:00-5:15 / Eric Hoenes

What is Christianity? How has the idea of what being Christian means changed over time and across cultures? This course will survey the global development of the Christian tradition from antiquity to the present, paying special attention to the diversity of Christian communities' beliefs and practices. - *Historical or Cultural Analysis*



RELS 2157-001

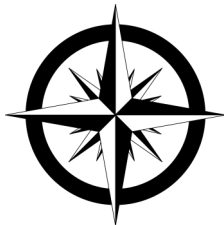
Buddhism in South & Southeast Asia

TR 2:30-3:45 / Alex Kaloyanides

This course examines Buddhist traditions of South and Southeast Asia. We will cover material from ancient India through contemporary Southeast Asia

with special attention to reading classical Buddhist texts and studying the development of the Theravada tradition and its religious, political, artistic, and economic contexts.

-*Historical or Textual Analysis*



RELS 2600-001

Orientation to the Study of Religion

Monday 4:00-6:45 / Prea Persaud

This course examines the animating theoretical and methodological questions in the academic study of religion. We will consider the emergence and history of the field as well as prominent themes such as myth, experience, and culture. This course pays close attention to the particular research, reading, and writing practices that shape the field. -*Oral and Writing intensive.*

RELS 3000-001

Religion & American Politics

Online / Jessica Johnson

This course studies historical and contemporary notions of "religious freedom" and conflicts over the separation of church and state in the United States. We examine how conservative evangelical Christians have constructed their relationship to national identity through various policy battles and cultural debates in the areas of law, education, government, and family.

- *Cultural or Historical Analysis*



RELS 3000-002

Material Culture of Ancient Israel, Palestine and Jordan

MWF 9:05-9:55 / Simon Gibson

(Cross-listed with HIST 3001-A01)

An overview of human development in the southern Levant (Israel, Palestine and Jordan) from prehistoric times to late Antiquity. Topics will include archaeological sites,



landscapes, building materials and procedures, ceramic finds, and other artifacts. We will examine modern archaeological excavation techniques, as well as the development of urbanism, the phenomenon of tells, and other aspects of material culture. Historical textual sources and the results of up-to-date archaeological excavations will also be addressed. The goal of the course is to provide the student with an overall historical and archaeological view of the people who inhabited the southern Levant from prehistoric times and until the advent of Islam.

-*Textual or Historical Analysis*

RELS 3000-003

Burned Over: Religion, Reform and Violence in America, 1800-1865

MWF 10:10-11:00 / Gabriel Klehr

(Cross-listed with HIST 3000-A01 & AMST 3050-005)

This class will explore the turbulent interactions among religion, politics and the economy from the Second Great Awakening to the Civil War. The American religious world was shattered by the Second Great Awakening. In its aftermath, some became convinced that God wanted believers to remake society in preparation for the coming millennium. Others pursued more radical visions, advocating violence as the only answer to the religious turmoil they saw around them. Others argued that a closer bond between politics and religion would knit American society together. We will look at figures as diverse as Brigham Young, Nat Turner, and Abraham Lincoln to examine how Americans attempted to understand their religious and secular worlds.

-*Historical or Textual Analysis*

RELS 3000-004

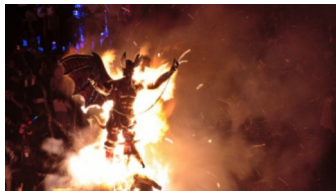
Legacy of the Holocaust

Online/Judy LaPietra

(Cross-listed with HGHR 3050-004 & INTL 3002-004)

The historical meaning and significance of the Holocaust will be explored, with particular emphasis on oral testimony. Through readings and discussions, we will analyze and discuss the behavior and perspectives of victims, bystanders, and perpetrators—and also our own perspectives, as students of the Holocaust. After reading what historians have written about the Nazi genocide, student teams will research the USC Shoah Foundation Institute’s collection of survivor testimonies.

- Textual or Historical Analysis



RELS 3001-001

The Devil (W)

TR 4:00-5:15 / Eric Hoenes

This course is a cross-cultural examination of the ultimate personification of evil and moral corruption—the Devil. We will interrogate how the idea of radical evil became personified in Christianity, and analyze various ways that the Devil is represented in religious texts, political imaginaries, and ritual practices around the world. This is a writing intensive course.

- Cultural Analysis



RELS 3116-001

Paul

MWF 12:20-1:15 / David Clausen

Paul, self-proclaimed “apostle to the Gentiles,” was and remains a most controversial figure in Christianity. The “latest perspective” on Paul seeks to understand this gifted, first-century missionary and theologian not as the creator of a new religion but as a devout Jew who felt divinely chosen to bring the Gentiles to a right standing with the God of Israel before the return of the Messiah Jesus. We will explore Paul’s life and mission, writings and rhetoric, challenges and legacy. Along the way we will become familiar with the world of Paul: the customs, cultures, politics, and locations which provide the background for understanding his life and times.

- Textual or Historical Analysis

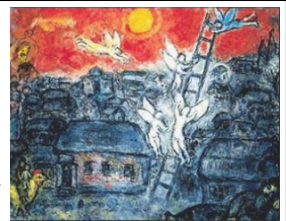
RELS 3122-001

Esoteric Religion: Thinking About Angels & Demons

TR 11:30-12:45 / John Reeves

The religions of the Near East are replete with stories and traditions featuring an indeterminate number of supernal entities which do not formally count as ‘deities,’ but which nevertheless exhibit knowledge and behavior which is unmistakably ‘deity-like.’ These entities are typically cataloged under the seemingly self-explanatory labels ‘angel’ and ‘demon.’ In this course we will engage in the close reading of a large number of narrative and ritual texts which feature such characters in an attempt to gain a better understanding of the variegated roles they play in pre-modern Jewish, Christian, Islamic, and other religious contexts. Careful attention will also be given to the cultural issues surrounding the generation and promulgation of competing character profiles within the scriptures of these kindred religions.

- Historical or Textual Analysis



RELS 3137-001

Religion in the African American Experience

Wednesday 2:30-5:15 (HYBRID) /

Julia Moore

(Cross-listed with AFRS 3050-001 & HIST 3000-A03)

Designed to introduce students to the multiplicity of African American reli-

gious traditions, this course explores the religions of Voodoo, Santeria, Christianity, the Nation of Islam, and African American Judaism. Issues of race, class, gender, identity, and violence will be points of discussion in light of black religious life.

-Historical or Cultural Analysis



RELS 3150-001

African American Church / Civil Rights

Tuesday 2:30-5:15 (HYBRID) /

Julia Moore

(Cross-listed with AFRS 3050-002 & HIST 3000-A04)

Designed to introduce students to

the historical beginnings of the local black church and the birth of African American Christianity. The activism of local black churches during the Modern Civil Rights Movement will be central points of investigation. - Historical or Cultural Analysis

RELS 3400-001

Applied Research / Fieldwork

By approval / Celia Sinclair

Internships in business or community-based organizations. Specific content based on contract between student, supervising professor and cooperating organization. Fulfills the [C], [H], or [T] requirement. Approximately 120 contact hours for the semester. Contact Celia Sinclair at cbsincla@unccl.edu for more information

RELS 4000-001

Archeology of Early Christianity

TR 1:00-2:15/James Tabor
Cross-listed with RELS 5000,
ANTH 4050 & ANTH 5050)

This course focuses on the material / archaeological evidence associated with the Jesus movement and what light it might shed on our understanding of emerging Christianity in the first two centuries. The emphasis will be on recent discoveries although the history of the "archaeology of earliest Christianity" will be reviewed and evaluated. The goal of the course is to attempt to reread our textual evidence in the light of such non-textual material remains. - *Historical or Textual Analysis*



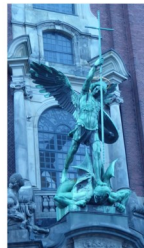
RELS 4000-001

Churches and Temples as Neuro-Performance Spaces

TR 4:00-5:15/Mark Pizzato
(Cross-listed with
THEA4001, AAHP3704,
HONR3700)

This course explores how the architecture, artworks, and performances in religious spaces reflect specific traditions - and the inner theatre of the visitor's brain.

-*Historical or Textual Analysis*



Front of St. Michael's Lutheran Church, Hamburg, Germany



Yunxiang Buddhist Temple, Nanxiang Old Town, Shanghai

RELS 4000-090

Malignant Fraternities

Monday 5:30-8:15 /
Barbara Thiede
Cross-listed with RELS 5000,
WGST 4050 & 5050

The Hebrew Bible was written by men and for men; working out the terms of masculinity and establishing how male hegemony valorizes the outcome is essential to the biblical project. In this course, we will explore how male friendship and male homosociality – and their potential homoerotic expression – are engendered and sustained by the use of women's bodies. We will also examine how the performance of masculinity is both defined and undermined by biblical writers. - *Historical or Textual Analysis*



RELS 4600-001

Senior Seminar

Monday 4:00-6:45 / Letha Victor

Senior Seminar is the capstone course for religious studies majors. As students of religion, we are often asked familiar and frustrating questions: What do you do in religious studies? What is "religion" and how does one identify something as "religious"? What are the ways that scholars go about researching religious subjects? Why study religion at all? We will map and articulate possible answers to these questions through critical evaluations of recently published books in this interdisciplinary field, and by applying these insights onto other religious "artifacts." - *Oral and Writing intensive*

Liberal Studies Courses

Religious Studies faculty teach the following courses for the General Education Program:

<p>LBST 2101Q-335: Western Civilizations- Ordering the World MW 11:15-12:05 / Joanne Maguire Breakouts Tuesday 10:00 / 11:30 / 1:00 / 2:30</p>	<p>LBST 2212Q-335: Literature & Culture- Sexing Shakespeare TR 1:00-1:50 / Kent Brintnall Breakouts Friday 9:05 / 10:00 / 11:15 / 1:25</p>	<p>LBST 2301-339: Critical Thinking and Communication: Sugar Slaves MWF 1:25-2:15 / Prea Persaud</p>
<p>LBST 2102-336: Global Connections-Asian Religion & Culture in Global Media TR 11:30-12:45 / Janna Shedd</p>	<p>LBST 2301-335: Critical Thinking and Communication: The Ecological Identity MWF 9:05-9:55/Tina Katsanos</p>	<p>LBST 2301-340: Critical Thinking and Communication: A Good Life. What Is It? Monday 4:00-6:45/Celia Sinclair</p>
<p>LBST 2102-337: Global Connections-Asian Religion & Culture in Global Media TR 1:00-2:15 / Janna Shedd</p>	<p>LBST 2301-336: Critical Thinking and Communication: The Ecological Identity MWF 10:10-1100 / Tina Katsanos</p>	<p>LBST 2301-341: Critical Thinking and Communication: A Good Life. What Is It? Wednesday 2:30-5:15/Celia Sinclair</p>
<p>LBST 2102-338: Global Connections- Witchcraft and Hauntings TR 11:30-12:45 / Letha Victor</p>	<p>LBST 2301-338: Critical Thinking and Communication: The Ecological Identity MWF 11:15-12:05/Tina Katsanos</p>	<p>LBST 2301-R91: Critical Thinking and Communication: A Good Life. What Is It? Wednesday 5:30-8:15/Celia Sinclair</p>

For more information visit religionsstudies.uncc.edu

Department Chair
Joanne Maguire
Joanne.Maguire@uncc.edu

Director of Undergraduate Studies
Celia Sinclair
cbsincla@uncc.edu

Director of Graduate Studies
Kent Brintnall
Kent.Brintnall@uncc.edu