

# RELIGION

## Overview and Contact Information

To major in religion is to ask questions about the many ways women and men have sought to make sense of their lives. Examining religious traditions—their notable leaders, their valued texts, and the social behaviors designed to embody their visions—is a central way to study the profound questions that direct so many areas of human endeavor. The study of religion is an excellent way of organizing a liberal arts education so that diverse cultures, artistic expressions, political forces, and gender assignments can be questioned and set in historical and changing contexts.

Our courses focus on sacred texts and interpretive traditions; religious thought; and religion in history and society. The study of religion is inherently comparative, international, and interdisciplinary in approach, embracing a range of methodologies from the humanities and social sciences.

## See Also

- Jewish Studies (<http://catalog.mtholyoke.edu/areas-study/jewish-studies>)

## Contact Information

**Amina Steinfelds, Chair**  
**Natalina Tulik, Academic Department Coordinator**

205 Skinner Hall  
 413-538-2233  
<https://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/religion>

## Faculty

**This area of study is administered by the Department of Religion:**  
 Susanne Mrozik, Professor of Religion

Mara Benjamin, Irene Kaplan Leiwant Associate Professor of Jewish Studies

Amina Steinfelds, Associate Professor of Religion

Luis Sales, Visiting Instructor in Religion

## Requirements for the Major

A minimum of 32 credits:

20 credits in religion at any level	20
12 additional credits in religion at the 300 level <sup>1</sup>	12
Majors must ensure their course selections include at least three different religious traditions such as Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, or Judaism. This requirement may be fulfilled by courses at any level and by courses that take a comparative approach.	
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>32</b>

<sup>1</sup> Only one 395 course will count toward the 300-level requirement

## Additional Specifications

- The Religion Major does not have a prescribed sequence of required courses. Students choose their course of study in close consultation with their advisors.

- Independent work is encouraged and, if approved by the advisor, such work may constitute partial fulfillment of the above requirements.
- Courses with a substantial focus on a religious tradition or a religious theme offered by other departments may be counted towards the Religion major with approval of the advisor and department chair. Examples include:

CLASS-211	Ancient Greek and Roman Myth	4
HIST-222	Muslim Politics in Modern South Asia	4
HIST-223	Religion and Politics in Modern India	4
HIST-235	Native American History through 1865	4
IR-324	Islamic Political Thought	4

- Please note this list is not comprehensive. Additional courses should be identified in consultation with the advisor or department chair.
- One extra-departmental course on relevant methodological or theoretical approaches may be counted towards the major with permission of the advisor. Such a course may be of particular value for students planning to do independent research. Examples include:

ANTHR-275	Research Methods in Cultural Anthropology	4
SOCI-225	Survey Research and Data Analysis	4
GNDST-201	Methods and Practices in Feminist Scholarship	4

- Please note that such courses may have prerequisites set by their department or require the permission of the instructor.

## Requirements for the Minor

A minimum of 20 credits:

Four courses in religion at any level	16
At least one additional course in religion at the 300 level	4
<b>Total Credits</b>	<b>20</b>

## Additional Specifications

- At least three of the courses should be taken in the Mount Holyoke Department of Religion.

## Course Offerings

### RELIG-100 Introduction to Religion

*Fall. Credits: 4*

This course is an introduction to the study of religion, assessing the nature of religion and methodological approaches through an examination of subject matter drawn from numerous traditions.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*A. Steinfelds*

*Restrictions: This course is limited to first years, sophomores and juniors*

### RELIG-102 Introduction to Islam

*Fall. Credits: 4*

This course examines Islamic religious beliefs and practices from the origins of Islam to the present, focusing on such central issues as scripture and tradition, law and theology, sectarianism and mysticism. Attention will be given to the variety of Islamic understandings of monotheism, prophethood, dogma, ritual, and society.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*A. Steinfelds*

**RELIG-103 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course provides a critical introduction to the writings contained in the Hebrew Bible (also known as the Old Testament). It investigates the social and historical context of the ancient Israelites, examines a range of ancient Near Eastern literature, and introduces the principal methods of biblical studies. Participants will read much of the Hebrew Bible as well as select non-Israelite sources. Examples of recent biblical scholarship will provide additional information for better understanding these writings and will present different methods for approaching and interpreting ancient texts.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-103*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*The department*

**RELIG-104 Introduction to the New Testament**

*Fall. Credits: 4*

Introduction to the New Testament investigates the social and historical context of first- and early second-century Christianity, examines New Testament and select non-canonical documents, and introduces you to the principal methods of New Testament studies. In the course of the semester you will read the works that make up most modern collections of the New Testament, a number of early Christian documents that did not make the final cut, and several ancient non-Christian sources.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-104*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*L. Salés*

**RELIG-112 Introduction to Judaism**

*Spring. Credits: 4*

Judaism is a 3,500-year-old tradition that has developed over time as Jewish communities all over the world creatively interacted with the different cultural and historical milieus in which they lived. This course explores the ways in which Judaism has sought to transform ordinary life into sacred life. What are the ways in which Judaism conceives of God, and what is the meaning of life? What roles do study, prayer, ethics, sex, marriage, family, rituals of the life cycle, and community play in Judaism? These and other questions will be taken up through study of diverse types of religious literature and historical evidence.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-112*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*M. Benjamin*

**RELIG-163 Introduction to Buddhism**

*Fall. Credits: 4*

Some scholars have argued that there is no such thing as 'Buddhism' in the singular, but only 'Buddhisms' in the plural. This course introduces students to select historically and culturally diverse forms of Buddhism, including Sri Lankan Theravada Buddhism, Japanese Zen Buddhism, and Tibetan Buddhism. The course pays particular attention to modern (and modernist) reinterpretations of Buddhism, including contested views of gender.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*S. Mrozik*

**RELIG-167 Hinduism: An Introduction**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

A major religious tradition of India, Hinduism is in practice a multiplicity of expressions. This course explores Hinduism's diverse traditions through its history, unifying themes, texts, and popular observances. We will read from the great texts (Ramayana, Mahabharata), learn about gods and goddesses (Krishna, the Great Goddess), and discuss art and ritual. Topics include: body techniques and the material universe (yoga, Tantra); philosophical traditions, concepts (karma, dharma); religious figures (Mirabai); movements (Bhakti). Hinduism's contemporary expressions in India and the West will be considered in social and historical context. Frequent illustration is provided through videos.

*Crosslisted as: ASIAN-167*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*The department*

**RELIG-201 Reading the Qur'an**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course examines the history, structure, and themes of the Qur'an and analyzes the place of the Qur'an in Islamic religious thought. Students will read the entire text of the Qur'an in translation, as well as selections from medieval and modern commentaries.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*A. Steinfels*

*Notes: This course counts toward the Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies majors and minors.*

**RELIG-205 Issues in Islamic History**

This course explores Islamic religious history and issues that have been of religious and cultural significance to Muslims in various eras.

**RELIG-207 Women and Gender in Islam**

*Spring. Credits: 4*

This course will examine a range of ways in which Islam has constructed women—and women have constructed Islam. We will study concepts of gender as they are reflected in classical Islamic texts, as well as different aspects of the social, economic, political, and ritual lives of women in various Islamic societies.

*Crosslisted as: GNDST-210SL*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*A. Steinfels*

*Notes: This course counts toward the Asian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies majors and minors.*

**RELIG-208 Religion and Science Fiction**

*Spring. Credits: 4*

This course examines the representation of religion and religious communities in science fiction. We will read works that speculate on the nature, origin, and function of religious beliefs and practices, and on the place of religion in imagined futures and universes. We will also explore science fiction-based religious movements, the use of science fiction to communicate religious ideas, and Afro-futurism. We will focus on mostly American novels, short stories, film, television, and music. Readings will include works by Ursula K. Le Guin, Octavia Butler, and Joanna Russ.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*A. Steinfels*

**RELIG-216 Whose Social Justice is it Anyway? Spirituality, Religion, and Civic Engagement***Spring. Credits: 4*

This theoretical and experiential course will examine the concept of social justice dating back to Roman Catholic teachings by St. Thomas Aquinas regarding poverty, and leading up to modern-day umbrella movements that include race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, national origin, and first language. It also examines the ways in which ideas about social justice have shifted. This will include intersections with global human rights movements, evangelicalism and intersectionality regarding identity politics. Students will participate in ethnographic community-based projects learning about how religion and/or spirituality are utilized for civic engagement.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**Other Attribute(s): Community-Based Learning, Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive**M. Runell Hall***RELIG-218 Women in American Religious History***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course is a critical study of significant women (Anne Hutchinson, Mother Ann Lee, Mary Baker Eddy, Ellen Gould White, Aimee Semple McPherson, Dorothy Day, and others) and their roles in the pluralistic character of American religion. It raises central questions concerning leadership, marginality, deviant behavior, and criticism of women. Students are expected to contribute to the course by their participation and individual research.

*Crosslisted as: GNDST- 210RH**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**The department***RELIG-221 Religious Movements in America***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

What is American religion? Is America a 'Christian' nation? How has immigration affected the American religious landscape? How have struggles for freedom, civil rights, racial, economic, gender, and LGBTQ equality affected what people believe and how they act out these beliefs? To begin to answer these questions, we survey the main historical narratives of religion in the U.S. from the colonial period to the present. We also zero in at various moments in this history to appreciate the variety of religion and religious experience in American life. This combination enables us to engage the tension between the two main ways of considering religion in America: the quest for religious consensus and the recognition of a thoroughly pluralistic American religious culture.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**The department***RELIG-223 Religion and Politics in Modern India***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

The history of India has been singled out for its complex intermingling of religion and politics. This course will explore the constitution of religious identities in two of India's largest religious communities: Hindu and Muslim. Focusing primarily on the colonial period, we will discuss religious reform movements, communal violence, mass politics, and the partition of the subcontinent into the independent states of India and Pakistan. Throughout we will be interested in the ways that the colonial experience affected the religious thought and practice of Indians. Finally, we will explore the meanings of this history for the postcolonial workings of democracy and secularism in modern India.

*Crosslisted as: HIST-223**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**Other Attribute(s): Speaking-Intensive, Writing-Intensive**The department***RELIG-225 Topics in Religion****RELIG-225CC Topics in Religion: 'Conquered and Colonized Christianities: 150-1650 CE'***Spring. Credits: 4*

This course offers an introduction to a constellation of Christianities that were eventually conquered or colonized, broadly construed. As such, we will cover writings from the early, medieval, and early modern periods originally written in a vast spectrum of languages, including, but not limited to, Greek, Coptic, Syriac, Arabic, Ethiopic, Old Slavonic, and western European vernaculars. These readings will be supplemented with theoretical literature drawn from postcolonial and poststructuralist thinkers.

*Crosslisted as: HIST-232CC, MEDST-217CC**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**L. Salés***RELIG-225CE Topics in Religion: 'Christian Ethics: Premodern, Postmodern'***Spring. Credits: 4*

This course offers an introduction to a broad range of premodern Christian (1st-15th century) writings concerning ethics. These readings will be read in tandem with a spectrum of postmodern thinkers, but particularly those belonging to a postcolonial or to a poststructuralist theoretical persuasion. The objective of the course is to question a hegemonic narrative of western ethics, and Enlightenment morality specifically, including idealist and consequentialist ethics.

*Crosslisted as: CST-249CE**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**L. Salés***RELIG-225HM Topics in Religion: 'Heretics, Martyrs, and Saints'***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

Heretics, Martyrs, and Saints investigates how early Christians described holy people as well as their nemeses. It explores how descriptions of martyrs, saints, heretics, demons, and even Satan himself were used to shore up the ever-contested boundaries of Christian orthodoxy and how the depiction of such figures forever changed the trajectory of Christian beliefs and practices. In the course of the semester we will read sources such as a letter from a Christian bishop wanting to be thrown to the lions, the dream journal of a female martyr, Gnostic gospels, wisdom from desert monks, and an ancient exorcism manual.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**The department*

**RELIG-225LF Topics in Religion: 'Love, Friendship, and Interpersonal Relations in Judaism'**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course explores teachings and practices having to do with interpersonal relations in Jewish religious tradition, including notions of 'spiritual friendship,' relations between parents and children, teachers and disciples, and loving partners. Drawing broadly on the many varieties of Jewish religious literature, with a special interest in the mystical traditions of Judaism, the course also addresses diverse ethical questions such as the nature of forgiveness, responsibility towards the needs of others, and sexual ethics.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-225LF*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*The department*

**RELIG-225MG Topics in Religion: Magic, Witchcraft, and Religion'**

*Spring. Credits: 4*

Religion counts among anthropology's most central and enduring areas of interest. This course traces a history of anthropological attention to belief and ritual from the nineteenth century to the present. We will read classic and contemporary ethnographic studies of religious systems, covering topics that include spirits and animism, totemism, magic, witchcraft, mythology, taboo, sacrilege, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, religion and modernity, and secularism. The course will scrutinize "religion" itself as a cultural and analytical category, and it will question how an anthropological perspective alters perceptions of the global politics of religion today.

*Crosslisted as: ANTHR-246*

*Applies to requirement(s): Social Sciences; Multicultural Perspectives*

*Other Attribute(s): Writing-Intensive*

*M. Watson*

*Prereq: ANTHR-105.*

**RELIG-232 Contemporary Jewish Ethics**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course will explore issues of contemporary ethics from the point of view of Jewish religious thought and tradition. Topics will include medical and genetic ethics, death and dying, family and sexual ethics, ethics of war, poverty, and the environment. The course will explore these issues in the context of theoretical approaches to questions of religion and ethics.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-232*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*The department*

*Prereq: 8 credits in religion or Jewish studies.*

**RELIG-233 Contemplative Practice and Religious Traditions**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

Contemplative practices and meditative techniques are central to many religious traditions. This course explores such practices, in part, through the study of religious texts that serve as guides to contemplation and 'mindfulness.' We also consider ways in which classical contemplative traditions are being adapted by contemporary spiritual seekers. Students will also have opportunities to engage in various forms of practice from Jewish, Christian, Muslim, Hindu, and Buddhist traditions, in order to exemplify the traditions being studied.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*The department*

**RELIG-234 Women and Gender in Judaism**

*Fall. Credits: 4*

This course examines gender as a key category in Jewish thought and practice. We will examine different theoretical models of gender, concepts of gender in a range of Jewish sources, and feminist Jewish responses to those sources.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-234, GNDST-210JD*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*M. Benjamin*

**RELIG-241 Women and Buddhism**

*Spring. Credits: 4*

This course examines the contested roles and representations of Buddhist women in different historical and cultural contexts. Using a variety of ethnographic, historical, and textual sources, the course investigates both the challenges and opportunities Buddhist women have found in their religious texts, institutions, and communities.

*Crosslisted as: GNDST-210BD*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives*

*S. Mrozik*

**RELIG-247 What Didn't Make It Into the New Testament**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

Hundreds of ancient Christian texts did not make it into the New Testament. 'What Didn't Make It into the New Testament' examines some of these excluded writings. We will explore Gnostic gospels, hear of a five-year-old Jesus killing (and later resurrecting) his classmates, peruse ancient Christian romance novels, tour heaven and hell, read the garden of Eden story told from the perspective of the snake, and learn how the world will end. In critically examining these ancient narratives, we will better appreciate the diversity of formative Christianity, better understand the historical context of the early church, and explore the politics behind what did and did not make it into the bible.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*The department*

**RELIG-251 Reading the Hebrew Bible**

*Fall. Credits: 4*

This course examines the Hebrew Bible in light of Jewish reading practices. Students will read significant sections of the Hebrew Bible in translation and learn to read ancient, medieval and modern Jewish approaches to the biblical text. This course seeks to help students become adept at the interpretation of texts and the practice of close reading.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-251*

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*M. Benjamin*

**RELIG-252 Magic, Prayer, and Sacrifice: Rituals and Why We Do Them**

*Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

From live sacrifice to sacred dances, from pilgrimage to bodily purification, rituals have long been considered a hallmark of religion. Yet, ritual activities are also important to apparently non-religious spheres of life, such as sporting events and political mobilization. This course will examine examples of ritual activity from a range of cultural contexts through the lens of anthropological, sociological, psychological, and religious studies theories of ritual. We will explore the structure of ritual activities, the question of whether rituals have meaning and function for individuals and for societies, and, if so, what those meanings and functions might be.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities*

*A. Steinfels*

**RELIG-256 What Didn't Make It in the Bible***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

Hundreds of ancient religious texts did not make it into the Hebrew Scripture (aka the Old Testament). This course examines some of these excluded writings. In particular, we will focus on works found among the Apocrypha, the Pseudepigrapha, and the Dead Sea Scrolls. We will read an ancient Harlequin romance, tour heaven and hell, hear of the adventures of fallen angels who sired giants (and taught humans about cosmetics), and learn how the world will end. In critically examining such texts, we will better appreciate the diversity of Judaism, better understand the historical context of early Christianity, and explore the politics behind what did and did not make it into the bible.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-256**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**The department***RELIG-258 Topics in the Study of Christianity****RELIG-258BD Topics in the Study of Christianity: 'The Body, Sex, and Early Christianity'***Fall. Credits: 4*

An introduction to early Christian understandings of the body and sex that aims at familiarizing students with a culturally and geographically diverse range of relevant primary sources and at equipping students with the critical-theoretical methodologies necessary to analyze, interpret, and assess these sources in their historical context. Students will read sources penned between the first and seventh centuries CE within the geopolitical limits of the Roman and Persian Empires and originally written in Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Coptic. The course will be supplemented with theoretical literature, including feminist, gender, and postcolonial theory, discourse analysis, and so on.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**L. Salés***RELIG-265 Holy Feast, Holy Fast: Sacred Food and Eating in Judaism***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course explores the role of food and eating in Jewish religious culture, but will also include a significant comparative religious dimension. Topics will include the ritual, religious, and social significance of the dietary laws in Judaism, the symbolic foods of Passover and other festivals, fasting and ascetic attitudes toward food, as well as food culture as a marker of Jewish identity.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-265**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**The department***RELIG-267 Buddhist Ethics***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This is an introduction to contemporary and classical Buddhist ethical ideals. Working with primary and secondary sources, we will ask the following questions: Is the universe moral? What are Buddhist ethical ideals and who embodies these? How do contemporary Buddhists interpret classical ethical ideals? What moral dilemmas do Buddhists face today? How do Buddhists grapple with moral ambiguity? We will consider the perspectives of Buddhists from different cultures including India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, and the United States.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**S. Mroziak***RELIG-295 Independent Study***Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 4**The department**Instructor permission required.***RELIG-306 Sex and the Early Church***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

This course examines the various ways first- through fifth-century Christians addressed questions regarding human sexuality. We will concentrate on the rise of sexual asceticism and pay particular attention to the relationship between sexuality and issues of gender, culture, power, and resistance. Primary readings will include letters, narrative accounts of female and male ascetics, monastic rules, and 'heretical' scriptures. These will be supplemented by modern scholarship in early Christian studies and the history of sexuality.

*Crosslisted as: GNDST-333TT**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**The department**Prereq: 4 credits from religion or gender studies.***RELIG-311 Sufism: The Mystic Path in Islam***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

Exploration of the mystical tradition in Islam known as Sufism, from its origins in medieval Iraq to its role in contemporary Islamic societies. This course focuses on how the Sufi pursuit of unity with, or annihilation in, God relates to the core monotheistic beliefs of Islam. Sufi theories and practices are studied through primary source materials. Special attention will be paid to the themes of love, desire, and beauty in the literature of Sufism.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**A. Steinfels**Notes: This course counts towards the Asian Studies, Middle Eastern Studies, and South Asian Studies majors and minors.***RELIG-323 Topics in Contemporary Theology****RELIG-323FT Topics in Contemporary Theology: 'Feminist Theologies'***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

Mary Daly, Elisabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Phyllis Trible, and Judith Plaskow, among others, have argued that traditional Jewish and Christian theological systems have overlooked the needs, concerns, histories, and contributions of women. Their challenges range from the historical modification of a presumably unbiased religious system to the outright rejection of a so-called patriarchal establishment. Whatever their approach, feminist theologies offer diverse and incisive tools for understanding how a theological system operates, how transitory cultural assumptions become embedded in ongoing doctrines, and how apparently minor adjustments can have significant ripple effects.

*Crosslisted as: GNDST-333FF**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**S. Mroziak**Prereq: 8 credits from Religion department.***RELIG-329 Buddhism in North America***Not Scheduled for This Year. Credits: 4*

In this course we will explore the diverse nature of Buddhist identity and practice in contemporary North America. After an overview of the major Buddhist traditions in North America, we will explore key factors in the shaping of North American Buddhist identities and practices, such as race, ethnicity and gender; immigration and conversion; meditation movements (including in prisons); social activism; North American forms of monasticism; and Buddhism in the popular media. No prior background required to take this course.

*Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**S. Mroziak**Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors*

**RELIG-331 Advanced Topics in Religion****RELIG-331DE Advanced Topics in Religion: 'Destroying Art Past and Present'***Spring. Credits: 4*

In this course, we will investigate the destruction of artworks and monuments for religious or political reasons, called iconoclasm. The seminar addresses the current debates involving the removal and destruction of confederate monuments in the U.S. and responses from government, media, and social critics. Concurrently, we will study key historical moments of iconoclasm ranging from the Byzantine era to the Protestant Reformation and the French Revolution. Studying iconoclasm in different historical periods raises the issue of the power of art in society. Through class discussion, group work, original research, and writing, we will explore how past iconoclasm may inform our understanding of the present. The work also involves an inquiry into art historical methodology as well as approaches from fields such as critical race theory, and a consideration of the role of the art historian in the present debates and social justice movements.

*Crosslisted as: ARTH-301DE**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**C. Andrews***RELIG-332 Seminar in American Religious History**

This course offers advanced students an opportunity to investigate with some sophistication a problem that requires careful attention to research methods, to critical literature, and to writing. Seminar topics include people, periods, or problems that have a particular bearing on religion in America.

**RELIG-337 Topics in the Study of Christianity****RELIG-337MC Topics in the Study of Christianity: 'Premodern Christian-Muslim Encounters'***Spring. Credits: 4*

This course explores the multidimensional nature of Christian-Muslim social, religious, economic, and political relations before, during, and briefly after the Crusades in the modern-day territories of Palestine, Israel, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Turkey, the Balkans, North Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula. Most of the readings in this course were originally penned in Syriac, Greek, Arabic, and Castilian, though we will read them in English translation. We will also investigate the impact of the Crusades on Middle Eastern society in the past and will assess their relevance for the present by applying the critical resources of postcolonial and feminist theories.

*Crosslisted as: MEDST-300MC, HIST-301MC**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities; Multicultural Perspectives**L. Salés**Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors***RELIG-343 The Sabbath***Spring. Credits: 4*

The practice of a weekly sacred day of rest has organized Jewish life for millennia. In this seminar, students will examine the Sabbath using narrative, folk, and legal primary sources from the biblical, Second Temple, rabbinic, medieval, and modern periods. Key themes include sacred time, cultural identity, and the transformation of religious practice. Experiential learning, and critical thinking about your experiential learning, are integral to this seminar.

*Crosslisted as: JWST-343**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**M. Benjamin**Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors***RELIG-352 Body and Gender in Religious Traditions***Spring. Credits: 4*

Do bodies matter in religious traditions? Whose bodies matter? How do they matter? By studying religious body ideals and practices, we examine the possibilities and problems different kinds of bodies have posed in religious traditions. Topics include religious diet, exercise, and dress; monasticism, celibacy, and sexuality; healing rituals, and slavery and violence. We pay special attention to contemporary challenges to problematic body ideals and practices coming from feminist, disability, postcolonial, queer, and trans theorists and activists.

*Crosslisted as: GNDST-333RT, CST-349RE**Applies to requirement(s): Humanities**S. Mrozik**Restrictions: Course limited to sophomores, juniors and seniors***RELIG-395 Independent Study***Fall and Spring. Credits: 1 - 8**The department**Instructor permission required.*