Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies

OFFICE
LA 4210, 410-704-2755

PROGRAMS OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies offers a major and minor in Philosophy, and a major and minor in Religious Studies.

Program in Philosophy

The Philosophy Program pays close attention to the history of philosophy. The program also attends to the diverse social and cultural settings out of which philosophy develops, to which it speaks and with which it interacts. Philosophy cultivates and nourishes rigorous thinking; the development and the practice of analytic and dialectical skills are strongly emphasized. The program encourages students to take as great a diversity of courses as possible. It is flexible enough to ensure the incorporation of new interpretations and new schools of philosophy.

The program prepares students for advanced work in philosophy, humanistic studies and various professions. The sound, clear and systematic thinking that philosophy emphasizes also makes philosophical education relevant to other disciplines. Hence, the program is designed to meet not only the needs of the majors and minors but also the needs of other students in the university. Furthermore, it fosters reflection, a prerequisite for leading a good life.

Program in Religious Studies

Religious studies as an academic endeavor takes as its subject matter two distinct but related objects of investigation. On the one hand, it focuses on the varied religious traditions that figure prominently in any adequate account of the development of human culture. On the other hand, it theorizes about the phenomenon of religion itself, abstracting from its concrete manifestations and subjecting it to explanation and evaluation. Both orientations reveal religion to be complex by nature. Any specific religious tradition is impressively multifaceted. Typically, it is the outgrowth of an intricate history and the embodiment of a distinctive program for communal existence. Its vision of the nature of the cosmos and its understanding of the meaning of human life may find expression through ritual, myth, doctrine, art or philosophy. When religion is treated in more general terms, investigation may explore its psychological, sociological, anthropological, artistic, ethical or metaphysical dimensions. These considerations make it apparent that religious studies is well conceived as a multidisciplinary enterprise whose subject matter is best understood through the employment of a variety of approaches.

TRANSFER CREDIT POLICY

All Philosophy and Religious Studies majors must complete a minimum of 24 units toward the major at Towson University, with at least 18 units at the upper (300–400) level.

All Philosophy and Religious Studies minors must complete a minimum of 18 units toward the minor at Towson University, with at least 12 units at the upper level.

MAJORS IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES


MINORS IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES


Philosophy Courses

PHIL 101 INTRODUCTION TO PHILOSOPHY (3)
Fundamental problems of philosophy and various proposals for the solution of these problems. GenEd II.C.1 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

PHIL 102 USING INFORMATION EFFECTIVELY IN PHILOSOPHY (3)
Information gathering, evaluation and communication. Develops critical thinking and problem solving techniques, communication and team building skills. GenEd I.B.

PHIL 103 INTRODUCTION TO ETHICS (3)
Introduction to the history and theory of ethics. GenEd II.C.1 or Core: Ethical Issues & Perspectives.

PHIL 111 INTRODUCTION TO LOGIC (3)
Study of and practice in inductive and deductive reasoning, the composition of argument and demonstration, and the detection of formal and informal fallacies as developed in the Western tradition. GenEd II.C.1 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

PHIL 112 HONORS LOGIC (3)
Study of and practice in inductive and deductive reasoning, the composition of argument and demonstration, and the detection of formal and informal fallacies as developed in the Western tradition. Prerequisite: Honors College admission. GenEd II.C.1.

PHIL 201 SOCIAL & POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY (3)
A consideration of social and political doctrines from both Western and Non-Western philosophical perspectives. The approach will be both historical and thematic. Themes will include: the individual and the state, the male-female dialectic, and attitudes toward property.

PHIL 204 RACE, CLASS AND GENDER (3)
Social and political philosophy; contemporary American ideas of race, class, and gender, with a focus on their interrelatedness. GenEd II.C.3 or Core: Diversity & Difference.

PHIL 212 HONORS COURSE: SPECIAL STUDIES IN PHILOSOPHY (3)
Small group discussions and philosophical analysis of selected works not generally available in other electives. May be repeated for credit provided a different topic is covered. Honors College course. GenEd II.C.1 or Core: Ethical Issues & Perspectives.

PHIL 219 INTRODUCTION TO ASIAN PHILOSOPHY (3)
Examination of the nature of Asian thought through a study of English translations of traditional sources of Indian, Tibetan, Chinese, and Japanese philosophy. GenEd II.D or Core: Global Perspectives.

PHIL 221 ANCIENT GREEK PHILOSOPHY (3)
The origins of Western philosophical thought will be studied in the works of the presocratics, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. GenEd II.C.1 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

PHIL 230 PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE (3)
Philosophical analysis of literature. A consideration of philosophical orientations in these works will be undertaken.
PHIL 251 AFRICAN AMERICAN PHILOSOPHY (3)
A philosophical examination of the current issues in African-American thought in such fields as religion, politics, education, economics and aesthetics. An effort will be made to determine the place and the role of the contemporary African-American in history. GenEd II.C.3.

PHIL 253 CONTEMPORARY ETHICAL PROBLEMS (3)
The meaning of moral experience and the moral problems which arise in connection with human sexual integrity, ownership of property, welfare, violence, civil disobedience, punishment, war, and truth telling in social relations and government. GenEd II.B.3.

PHIL 255 ENVIRONMENTAL ETHICS (3)
Philosophical views on rights of non-human animals, intervaluation of environment and economics, "deep" vs "shallow" ecological ethics, duties to future generations, and other issues. Core: Ethical Issues & Perspectives or GenEd II.B.3.

PHIL 260 PHILOSOPHY OF THE PRISON INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX (3)
Introduces the student to the philosophical study of the "Prison Industrial Complex," the vast system of prisons and jails, many of them run by private profit-seeking corporations, that many consider to be a mainstay of the 21st century metropolis. An introductory appreciation of philosophical readings of the phenomenon: the birth of the prison in the 18th and 19th centuries and its rapid late 20th century growth within the U.S. and abroad. Special attention given to the work of feminist, queer and anti racist activists and scholars. In the final section we will discuss critiques and recent calls for change. Core: Metropolitan Perspectives.

PHIL 270 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES (3)
Considers contemporary issues from the uniquely philosophical perspective to stimulate independent reflection. May be repeated for a total of 6 units provided a different topic is covered.

PHIL 272 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES (3)
Considers contemporary issues from the uniquely philosophical perspective to stimulate independent reflection. May be repeated for a total of 6 units provided a different topic is covered.

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PHIL 285 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES (3)
Considers contemporary issues from the uniquely philosophical perspective to stimulate independent reflection. May be repeated for a total of 6 units provided a different topic is covered.
PHIL 339 THEORIES OF KNOWLEDGE (3)
A historical and systematic approach to the truth value and elements of the forms of human knowledge. The theories of major philosophers will be studied. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 341 ETHICS (3)
Analysis of readings from the principle classical and contemporary ethical sources; study of the basic moral concepts as found in these sources; applications to contemporary moral concerns. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 343 AESTHETICS (3)
An analytical and historical examination of concepts of the nature of art, beauty, aesthetic value, aesthetic perception, and of the modes of existence of artifacts. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 353 PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION (3)
Exposition of various approaches to the philosophy of religion with an analysis of the major issues on which they differ and agree. Not open to students who successfully completed PHIL 451. Prerequisites: two courses in philosophy or religion.

PHIL 361 BIOMEDICAL ETHICS (3)
A search for guidelines in such moral problems as abortion, the care of the dying, organ transplants, informed consent in therapy and experimentation, adequate health care and its just distribution, control of human behavior by drugs, surgery, etc., test-tube reproduction, population control, genetic engineering and counseling. Prerequisites: One lower-level course in PHIL or consent of instructor. Core: Ethical Issues & Perspectives.

PHIL 371 BUSINESS ETHICS (3)
Economics is one of the "moral sciences" insofar as it deals with an important sphere of human activity which intends a good. This course will institute a philosophical reflection on economic ideas as they appear in the three main categories of opinion, viz., conservative, liberal and radical. Attention will be drawn to the epistemological, ethical and metaphysical presuppositions of these traditions. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy or consent of instructor.

PHIL 380 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 381 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 382 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 383 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 384 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 385 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

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Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

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Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 388 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 389 PHILOSOPHICAL TOPICS (3)
Courses offered under this title will be of variable content. Topics of traditional philosophical interest or of philosophical problems in other areas of knowledge or of contemporary interest will be offered. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: one lower-level course in philosophy.

PHIL 413 PHENOMENOLOGY (3)
An examination of phenomenology as both a philosophical method and a philosophical position. Themes to be considered include consciousness, the body, time, and the experience of others. Primary course readings in the works of Husserl, Heidegger, Sartre, Merleau-Ponty. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 417 EXISTENTIALISM (3)
Some of the major existentialist philosophers will be studied, e.g., Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir. The philosophical themes of transcendence, the absurd, estrangement, and anxiety will be considered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 427 KANT (3)
Study of Kant’s most important writings. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 440 PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS (3)
The study of a major philosophical system or position, classical or modern, and of its important proponents. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

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PHIL 449 PHILOSOPHICAL SYSTEMS (3)
The study of a major philosophical system or position, classical or modern, and of its important proponents. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 450 WRITING SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES (3)
The course concentrates on a specific issue or thinker within the philosophical tradition and on developing the skills necessary to do quality written work in the discipline. Possible topics include: Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Concepts of Space & Time, Dimensions of Freedom. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisites: ENGL 102 and two courses in philosophy. GenEd I.D or Core: Advanced Writing Seminar.

PHIL 451 WRITING SEMINAR IN PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES (3)
The course concentrates on a specific issue or thinker within the philosophical tradition and on developing the skills necessary to do quality written work in the discipline. Possible topics include: Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Concepts of Space & Time, Dimensions of Freedom. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisites: ENGL 102 and two courses in philosophy. GenEd I.D.

PHIL 470 PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS (3)
A consideration of one of the perennial interests of philosophy. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 471 PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS (3)
A consideration of one of the perennial interests of philosophy. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 472 PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS (3)
A consideration of one of the perennial interests of philosophy. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 495 RESEARCH TUTORIAL IN PHILOSOPHY (3)
Directed readings and research leading to a thesis paper under one or more members of the department. Prerequisites: senior majors in philosophy or senior non-major, submission in advance of an outline of proposed research; permission of proposed director and department chair. Repeatable for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered, but only one attempt will count towards the major requirements.

PHIL 498 PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEMS (3)
The study of a major philosophical system or position, classical or modern, and of its important proponents. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units provided a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in philosophy.

PHIL 497 PHILOSOPHY INTERNSHIP (3-6)
Supervised experience in work settings using the analytic, organizational, comprehension, and communication skills and content knowledge available through the study of philosophy. Positions may be in government agencies, public or private foundations, industry, journalism, law firms, among others. May be repeated for a maximum of 6 units. No credit toward the Philosophy major. Prerequisite: approval of the philosophy internship coordinator. Graded S/U.

Religious Studies Courses

RLST 103 EXPLORING BIBLICAL ARCHAEOLOGY (3)
The nature of archaeological evidence, its context, recovery, reconstruction, and interpretation. Includes application of archaeological evidence in problem solving and the archaeology of Israel. GenEd II.D.

RLST 105 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION (3)
Study of world religious traditions informed by comparative, historical and phenomenological methodologies. Not open to students who have successfully completed PHIL 105. GenEd II.D or Core: Global Perspectives.

RLST 201 INTRODUCTION TO THE HEBREW BIBLE (3)
Overview of the history, literature, culture of the Hebrew Bible; survey of various biblical books and modern, critical interpretation of biblical literature. GenEd II.C.1 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

RLST 202 INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY (3)
Survey of the Christian religious tradition from its origins to contemporary times highlighting doctrines, practices, texts, values, institutional structures and community forms and emphasizing cultural context and diversity. GenEd: II.C.1 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

RLST 203 INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM (3)
Survey of the Islamic religious tradition from its origins to the present examining basic concepts, ritual practices, and religious institutions; emphasizing diversity of socio-cultural forms and interpretations. GenEd II.D or Core: Global Perspectives.

RLST 204 WOMEN IN WORLD RELIGIONS (3)
Role of women, both human and divine, in the major Asian and Western religions. Not open to students who successfully completed PHIL 205. GenEd II.D or Core: Diversity & Difference.

RLST 205 JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM (3)
History, scriptures, doctrines, practices and interactions of three monotheistic religions. Not open to students who successfully completed PHIL 206. GenEd II.C.3 or Core: Diversity & Difference.

RLST 206 JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY AND ISLAM (3)
History, scriptures, doctrines, practices and interactions of three monotheistic religions. Not open to students who successfully completed PHIL 206. GenEd II.C.3 or Core: Diversity & Difference.

RLST 207 INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM (3)
Survey of dominant forms of Buddhism in Asia during its classical period and subsequent spread to the West and encounter with modernity. GenEd II.D or Core: Global Perspectives.

RLST 208 INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM (3)
Dominant forms of Hinduism during its "classical" South Asian period, and its continuation into the contemporary era as a modern world religion. GenEd II.D or Core: Global Perspectives.

RLST 209 RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS OF ASIA (3)
Survey of principal religious traditions of Asia, subsequent global spread, and encounter with modernity. GenEd II.D or Core: Global Perspectives.

RLST 210 INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM (3)
Survey of Jewish identity, history, intellectual traditions, community, philosophy, mysticism, holidays, life-cycle events, rituals, and prayer. GenEd II.C.3 or Core: Diversity & Difference.

RLST 211 INTRODUCTION TO JEWISH THOUGHT (3)
Religious and historical developments of Jewish thought; prominent Jewish philosophers and mystics who shaped its eclectic character. GenEd II.C.3 or Core: Arts & Humanities.

RLST 270 TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3)
Introduction to diverse topics in the study of religion. May be repeated for a maximum of six units provided a different topic is covered.
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RLST 305</td>
<td>FAITH PERSPECTIVES IN MEDICAL ETHICS (3)</td>
<td>Hindu, Buddhist, Islamic, Christian, and Jewish perspectives on issues in medical ethics including the role of the doctor, abortion, cloning, pre gender selection, mental health, and euthanasia. Prerequisite: One course in a natural science, religious studies, philosophy, or consent of the instructor. Core: Ethical Issues &amp; Perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 307</td>
<td>BUDDHISM IN TIBET (3)</td>
<td>Overview of the form of Buddhism that developed in Tibet and subsequently spread to the West and other areas of the world during the modern era. Prerequisite: one RLST course or consent of the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 308</td>
<td>BUDDHIST SAINTS AND THEIR STORIES (3)</td>
<td>Cross-cultural survey of Buddhist saints and the beliefs, practices, and literary traditions associated therewith. Prerequisite: One prior RLST course or consent of instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 310</td>
<td>JEWISH LAW AND ETHICS (3)</td>
<td>Response of Jewish law and ethics to medical ethics, war, citizenship, environment, family, sexual ethics, government, contemporary state of Israel, women’s issues, and Jewish/Gentile relationships in a multi-denominational approach. Prerequisite: One course in PHIL or RLST or consent of instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 311</td>
<td>JEWISH MYSTICISM AND KABBALAH (3)</td>
<td>Classical Kabbalah of Provence and Gerona, the Zohar, and the Kabbalah of Zafed with attention given to major trends in Jewish mysticism. Prerequisite: One course in RLST or one course in PHIL or consent of the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 312</td>
<td>JEWISH ETHICS AND SPIRITUALITY IN HASIDISM (3)</td>
<td>The Tanya, the major work of Hasidism, is used to explore mystical and ethical aspects of Hasidism such as human attachment to divine reality, repentance and forgiveness, spiritual happiness. Prerequisite: One course in RLST or PHIL or consent of instructor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RLST 313</td>
<td>ISLAMIC ETHICS (3)</td>
<td>Historical, theoretical, and practical approaches to ethics in Islam. Core: Ethical Issues &amp; Perspectives.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 331</td>
<td>EXPLORING GENESIS (3)</td>
<td>Theological, textual, and sociological analysis of Genesis aimed to develop new perspectives on the text and on Israelite civilization. Prerequisite: One course in Religious Studies or consent of the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 335</td>
<td>PROPHETS AND PROPHECY IN ANCIENT ISRAEL (3)</td>
<td>Examination of phenomenon and history of Israelite prophecy in the Hebrew Bible in light of prophecy in the ancient Near East. Prerequisite: one course in Religious Studies or Philosophy at the 100 or 200 level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 354</td>
<td>RELIGION AND SCIENCE (3)</td>
<td>Exploration of alternative conceptions of the relation of religion and science; consideration of specific instances, both historic and contemporary, of their engagement and/or encounter. Prerequisites: One course in RLST or PHIL or consent of instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 355</td>
<td>INTRODUCTION TO THE NEW TESTAMENT (3)</td>
<td>Major themes of the biblical literature, and of its religious, philosophical, and cultural implications. Not open to students who successfully completed PHIL 355. Prerequisite: One lower-level course in philosophy, religion, or history.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 357</td>
<td>SPECIAL TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE RELIGION (3)</td>
<td>Study of a number of the world’s major religious traditions emphasizing specific philosophical and psychological problems encountered therein. Not open to students who successfully completed PHIL 357. Prerequisite: One course in philosophy, religion, or history.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 363</td>
<td>SUFISM: ISLAMIC MYSTICISM (3)</td>
<td>Survey of the origins and development of Islamic mysticism, including its scriptural sources, mystical practices and rituals, Sufi orders, Sufi saints, and Sufism’s influence on Islamic material culture and literature. Prerequisite: one course in Religious Studies of Philosophy or consent of the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 367</td>
<td>ISLAM IN THE MODERN AGE (3)</td>
<td>An examination of modern and contemporary Islamic movements of reform, renewal, and revolution. Topics include the status of women, religious pluralism, human rights, forms of governance, and warfare. Prerequisite: One course in RLST or PHIL, or consent of the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 370</td>
<td>ADVANCED TOPICS IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3)</td>
<td>Examination of diverse topics in the study of religion. May be repeated for a maximum of 15 units provided a different topic is covered.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 413</td>
<td>THE KABBALAH OF THE ZOHAR (3)</td>
<td>Studies of the Book of Splendor (Zohar), the most influential composition of the Kabbalah; themes include parts of the soul, mystical experience, good and evil, the Zoharic concepts of life and death, and time and eternity. Prerequisites: At least two courses in Religious Studies or Philosophy or the consent of the instructor.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RLST 470</td>
<td>SEMINAR IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES (3)</td>
<td>Critical study at an advanced level of a topic or theme of general interest in the discipline of Religious Studies. May be repeated if a different topic is covered. Prerequisite: two courses in Religious Studies.</td>
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