Religious Studies Courses (RELS)

RELS Courses

This is a list of courses with the subject code RELS. For more information, see Religious Studies (College of Liberal Arts and Sciences) in the catalog.

RELS:1000 First-Year Seminar 1 s.h.
Small discussion class taught by a faculty member; topics chosen by instructor; may include outside activities (e.g., films, lectures, performances, readings, visits to research facilities). Requirements: first- or second-semester standing.

RELS:1001 Judaism, Christianity, and Islam 3 s.h.
Introduction to sacred literature, beliefs, and rituals of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; historical and contemporary relationship between these three Abrahamic religions. GE: Historical Perspectives.

RELS:1015 Global Religious Conflict and Diversity 3 s.h.
Origins, evolution, and history of indigenous and global religions; role of religion in causing conflict, promoting peace, and/or mitigating effects of conflicts; religious, cultural, and institutional systems, conceptual and otherwise, that produce and/or manage violence, peace, and social change. GE: Diversity and Inclusion.

RELS:1041 African American Religion and Popular Culture 3 s.h.
Examination of the role African American religions play in shaping 20th century and contemporary popular culture in the United States; students explore recent histories of Black Christianity, American Islam, and African diaspora religions; gender and race; cultural production in hip hop, jazz, rhythm and blues, literature, poetry, film, sports, cuisine, visual art, and style. Same as AFAM:1041.

RELS:1050 Big Ideas: Introduction to Information, Society, and Culture 3 s.h.
What is information? What does it teach us about societies and cultures? How is information used to shape societies and even personal preferences? What types of information are there and how can we understand and use them? Students work with faculty from multiple disciplines to investigate these questions using inquiry-based activities to build success in critical thinking and teamwork. GE: Quantitative or Formal Reasoning. Same as POLI:1050.

RELS:1060 Journey Through World Religions 3 s.h.
What makes a religion work, where do they come from, why and how religion(s) become structured in the lives of individuals and cultures, and how different cultures define and inhabit the religions that are practiced on their soil.

RELS:1070 Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament 3 s.h.
History, religion, and thought of ancient Jews as recorded in their scripture. GE: Values and Culture.

RELS:1080 Introduction to the New Testament 3 s.h.

RELS:1130 Introduction to Islamic Civilization 3 s.h.
Survey of texts, ideas, events, institutions, geography, communities, literature, arts, sciences, and cultures in Islamic communities and societies since the 7th century. GE: International and Global Issues; Values and Culture. Same as HIST:1030.

RELS:1225 Medieval Religion and Culture 3 s.h.
Religion in Europe from classical antiquity to dawn of the Reformation; the religious element in traditions such as art, architecture, literature. GE: Historical Perspectives. Same as HIST:1025.

RELS:1250 Modern Religion and Culture 3 s.h.
European and American religious life from Renaissance to 21st century; focus on specific themes, such as secularism, regionalism, pluralism. GE: Historical Perspectives. Same as HIST:1050.

RELS:1350 Introduction to African American Religions 3 s.h.
GE: Values and Culture. Same as AFAM:1250.

RELS:1400 Biblical Archaeology 1,3 s.h.
Introduction to the science of archaeology and the archaeology of the lands of the Bible to understand historical, cultural, economic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds of the Bible and biblical periods. Same as CLSA:1400.

RELS:1404 Introduction to Asian Religions 3 s.h.
Religious beliefs, practices in India, China, Japan. GE: Values and Culture. Same as ASIA:1040, HIST:1610.

RELS:1430 The Bible Matters: Biblical Studies for Our Modern World 3 s.h.
Curious about what the Bible is or how it was created, the biblical character that your friends keep referencing, where ideas like Satan and the apocalypse come from, or how the Bible influences our world today? Introduction to the Bible and its influences on Western culture; course format organized by question types to allow flexibility in learning.

RELS:1470 Contemporary Science Fiction: Beyond the Usual 3 s.h.
A different perspective on fantasy and science fiction; focus on authors “beyond the usual”; issues of race, gender, societal injustice, and reimaging tomorrow as depicted in speculative fiction by authors writing from more diverse perspectives.

RELS:1502 Asian Humanities: India 3 s.h.
Introduction to 4,000 years of South Asian civilization through popular stories. Taught in English. GE: Values and Culture. Same as ASIA:1502, SOAS:1502.

RELS:1506 Introduction to Buddhism 3 s.h.
Development of Buddhism in India, its spread across Asia, and arrival in the West; exploration of diverse Buddhist philosophies, practices, and cultures; readings from India, Tibet, China, Japan, Korea, and Southeast Asia. GE: Values and Culture. Same as ASIA:1060, HIST:1612.

RELS:1606 Civilizations of Asia: South Asia 3-4 s.h.
Civilization of a vast region that includes India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. GE: Historical Perspectives; International and Global Issues. Same as ASIA:1606, HIST:1606.
RELS:1670 Korea in the World 3 s.h.
Comprehensive and critical understanding of Korea’s place in the world; emphasis on historical and sociocultural roots of various aspects of life on the contemporary Korean peninsula (both North and South Korea); comprehensive list of topics including cultural production (K-pop and film), religions, economy, gender relations, culture, politics, and prospects for reunification. Taught in English. Same as ASIA:1670, KORE:1670.

RELS:1702 Religion in America Today 3 s.h.
How American men, women, and children practice their beliefs in today’s society. GE: Values and Culture.

RELS:1765 U.S. Latina/o/x Religions 3 s.h.
Beliefs and practices of U.S. Latina/o/x, ways that their beliefs and practices are unique and where they overlap with mainstream U.S. society; beliefs, symbols, and practices among U.S. Latina/o/x on national and local level; field visits to local churches and religious sites; class visitors share insights. Same as LATS:1765.

RELS:1810 Happiness in a Difficult World 3 s.h.
Religious backgrounds and unique spiritualities of Maya Angelou (an African-American Christian), Black Elk (a Lakota Sioux medicine man), and the Dalai Lama (a Tibetan Buddhist monk); forms of oppression that humans can experience as obstacles to happiness, and forms of liberation that are possible (social, political, economic, mental, emotional, spiritual). GE: Values and Culture.

RELS:1903 Quest for Human Destiny 3 s.h.
Quests for destiny in terms of perceived options/goals and ability to recognize, pursue, achieve them. GE: Values and Culture.

RELS:1997 Harry Potter and the Religion of Fandom 3 s.h.
Exploration of the cultural impact of the Harry Potter series, particularly as it relates to fandom; opportunity to question religious significance of fandom and interpretation (e.g., are fandoms religious, how fandoms and religion intersect with consumerism, how fans reinvent the series, what is an author's responsibility to their fans); students delve into the wizarding world through excerpts from novels, fan-created media, and scholarly articles to explore these questions about religion and popular culture.

RELS:2000 Engaging Religious Diversity for Leadership and Entrepreneurship 3 s.h.
Practical skills in engaging religious diversity for workplace success; understanding religion’s influence on perceptions and choices of business leaders, investors, customers, and coworkers; insight into how to build professional relationships with people from different backgrounds; clarity about your own ethical values. GE: Diversity and Inclusion.

RELS:2080 Public Life in the U.S.: Religion and Media 3 s.h.
Examination of how the U.S. came into being through specific communication practices, how religion has helped and hindered that process; religious roots of the idea of the U.S., intertwined histories of print media and religion, role of religion and secularism in public discourse; U.S. pride as a nation in which diversity thrives in public discourse; communicative acts that created and sustained this country and also mark sites of discord, conflict, and confusion from the very beginnings of the U.S. to today; how religion has been a source of national identity and national division. Same as COMM:2080.

RELS:2087 Narnia and Beyond: The Writings of C.S. Lewis 3 s.h.
Exploration of C.S. Lewis’s use of fantasy to describe the indescribable, his efforts to empathize with human suffering while hoping in possibility of miracles, and his jargon-free narration of Christian beliefs for a war-weary country; Lewis’s works that continue to attract attention, ranging from children’s literature to science fiction to autobiography and nonfiction; as a professor of medieval and renaissance literature, Lewis’s unique perspective on Christianity that led him to make use of imagery, metaphors, and narratives previously neglected by Christian thinkers.

RELS:2122 The Place of Animals in the Hebrew Bible 3 s.h.
Why the biblical God permits humans to eat other animals' flesh; fundamental dietary differences between humans and the beasts.

RELS:2182 Ancient Mediterranean Religions 3 s.h.
Introduction to major religious traditions of ancient Mediterranean world; Mesopotamia, the Levant (Hebrew Bible), Egypt, Greece, and Rome; central aspects of mythology, ritual, and archaeology, individually and in comparative perspective; ancient Judaism and Christianity considered in their various cultural contexts; basic concepts for understanding cultural exchange; fundamental theories in the study of religion. GE: Values and Culture. Same as CLSA:2482.

RELS:2250 Jews, Judaism, and Social Justice 3 s.h.
Jewish frameworks for grappling with justice and ethics from ancient world to present day; emphasis on internal diversity of Jewish experience as well as interactions with dominant and other minority cultures. Same as GWSS:2050, HIST:2150, SJUS:2050.

RELS:2260 Hard Cases in Healthcare at the Beginning of Life 3 s.h.
Exploration of ethical impact that advances in biotechnology—including genetic, reproductive, and neonatal technology—are having in the medical arena and on humanity; consideration of the powerful influence that religion and spirituality have on most people's thinking about life and death. Same as GHS:2260.

RELS:2265 Hard Cases in Healthcare at the End of Life 3 s.h.
Preparation for future healthcare providers to make difficult ethical decisions regarding the end of life; interactive course. Same as ASP:2265, GHS:2265.
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<tr>
<th>Course Code</th>
<th>Course Title</th>
<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:2272</td>
<td>Gods and Superheroes: Mythologies for a Modern World</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2289</td>
<td>Jerusalem: The Holy City</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2330</td>
<td>Wealth, Inequality, and Islam</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2353</td>
<td>Love: Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Art</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2361</td>
<td>Middle East and Mediterranean: Alexander to Suleiman</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2420</td>
<td>Almost Human: Exploring Identity in Science Fiction</td>
<td>1,3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2444</td>
<td>Cities of the Bible</td>
<td>2 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2475</td>
<td>Islam in America</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2620</td>
<td>Sex and the Bible</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2674</td>
<td>Food, Body, and Belief: A Global Perspective</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2775</td>
<td>The Bible and the Holocaust</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2834</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2852</td>
<td>Women in Islam and the Middle East</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2877</td>
<td>Sport and Religion in America</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2930</td>
<td>Digital Media and Religion</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2947</td>
<td>Quest II: Sex, Love, and Death</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2955</td>
<td>Human Rights and Islam</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:2980</td>
<td>Religion and Contemporary Popular Culture</td>
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<td>RELS:2986</td>
<td>Religion and Women</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:3003</td>
<td>Classical and Hellenistic Periods</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:3055</td>
<td>Death, Dying, and Beyond in Asian Religions</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<td>RELS:3190</td>
<td>Medieval to Modern: The Birth of Protestantism</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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RELS:3243 Pagans and Christians: The Church from Jesus to Muhammad 3 s.h.
Introduction to history of early Christianity, from time of Jesus to rise of Islam; focus on major movements, intellectuals, institutions in this period; growth of Christianity in different geographical areas including the Middle East, Greece, Western Europe, Africa; Christian relations with Jews, pagans, Muslims; conversion; heresy, making of biblical canon; martyrdom; women and gender roles; asceticism, monasticism, sexuality; church and state; theological controversy and schisms; cult of saints; the Holy Land and pilgrimage. Same as CLSA:3443.

RELS:3245 Mythology of Otherworldly Journeys 3 s.h.
Examination of mythology of otherworldly journeys from earliest religions to Hellenistic period; historical context; comparison for common themes in their evolution over time; directed readings of mythological texts dealing with otherworldly journeys; ways in which past cultures confronted larger mysteries of life and death. Same as CLSA:3445.

RELS:3247 Banned from the Bible: Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha 3 s.h.
Introduction to biblical Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha; writings dating from third century B.C.E. to third century C.E. fictionally attributed to characters in the Hebrew Bible and New Testament, or written as though they originated in the First or Second Temple periods, not included in Jewish or major Christian canons of scripture; English translations of documents from this period; key themes and interpretative techniques common throughout biblical texts that provide tremendous insight into the worlds that produced the Hebrew Bible and New Testament. Same as CLSA:3427.

RELS:3267 Dissent and Rebellion in Islamic Societies: Was There an Arab Spring? 3 s.h.
The year 2021 is the 10th anniversary of the protest movement that started in Tunisia and impacted countries in Southwest Asia and North Africa (and beyond); students review, explain, and analyze these transformative events.

RELS:3375 The Great Collision 3 s.h.
Major developments in architecture, sculpture, ceramics, and mosaics in Israel, Palestine, Syria, and Arabia from death of Alexander the Great to rise of Islam (4 B.C.E. to 8 C.E.); Greek and Roman influences versus local traditions; Roman Empire; growth of churches, synagogues, and mosques; identity and religion. Same as ARTH:3375.

RELS:3385 Early Modern Catholicism 3 s.h.
Same as HIST:3485.

RELS:3431 Gender and Sexuality in East Asia 3 s.h.
Examination of historical construction of gender and sexuality in East Asia from mid-19th century to present. Same as ASIA:3431, GWSS:3131.

RELS:3520 Religious Violence and Nationalism 3 s.h.
Study of religious ideologies that lead to violence in the name of nationality throughout history and in modern times. Same as CLSA:3520.

RELS:3550 Social Justice, Religion, and Spirituality: Faith and Belief Ignited 3 s.h.
Examination of some distinctively American traditions of religion, spirituality, and social justice, including women and men who have channeled their religio-spiritual beliefs into social justice in their communities; historical and anthropological focus; examination of U.S. movements (e.g., the Catholic Worker movement, the United Farm Workers movement, the civil rights movement, iterations of the feminist movement); direct involvement with the communities. Same as GWSS:3550, SJUS:3550.

RELS:3580 Religion and Healing 3 s.h.

RELS:3645 Buddhist Philosophy 3 s.h.
Theories and arguments concerning the Buddhist path to enlightenment. Same as PHIL:3845.

RELS:3655 Zen Buddhism 3 s.h.
Same as ASIA:3655, HIST:3655.

RELS:3700 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I 3 s.h.
Operational and financial aspects of nonprofit management; mission and governance of organization; strategic planning for effective management, including finance, budget, income generation, fund-raising. Same as ENTR:3595, MGMT:3500, MUSM:3500, NURS:3595, SSW:3500.

RELS:3701 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II 3 s.h.
Qualities for leadership of nonprofit organizations, including relationships with staff and volunteers; relationship of nonprofit and outside world; marketing, public relations, advocacy strategies for nonprofits. Same as MGMT:3600, NURS:3600, SSW:3600.

RELS:3704 Egyptian Art 3 s.h.
Survey of ancient Egypt over 3,500 years with emphasis on art and architecture in context; workshops, patrons, and audiences of Egyptian art; major principles, themes, and meanings of Egyptian art; relationship between writing and artistic representation; connections between art, kingship, and Egyptian view of the world; art and architecture of central elite and other social groups. Same as ARTH:3320.

RELS:3716 Greek Religion and Society 3 s.h.
From Bronze Age to the Hellenistic period, in context of Mediterranean culture; evidence such as choral hymn, inscribed prayers, magical curses inscribed on lead, architecture, sculpted offerings to the gods. Same as CLSA:3416.

RELS:3745 Twentieth- and Twenty-first-Century African American Religion: Civil Rights to Black Lives Matter 3 s.h.
Twentieth- and twenty-first-century African American religious history; major political and cultural movements including civil rights, Black power, Black feminism/womanism, hip hop, and Black Lives Matter; their impact on Black Christianity and Islam in the United States. Same as AFAM:3245.
RELs:3808 Malcolm X, King, and Human Rights 3 s.h.
Religion and politics of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. in the context of U.S. civil rights and international human rights in West Africa and the Muslim world; emphasis on civil rights connections to Gandhi, the Nobel Peace prize, and other international experiences that have impacted Pan Africanists, such as Stokely Carmichael, who worked on human rights. Recommendations: international studies major or undergraduate standing. Same as AFAM:3500, HIST:3160.

RELs:3850 Perspectives on Migration 3 s.h.
Explores the origins and functions of migration in cultural, religious, political, and legal discourses over time from a plurality of disciplinary and experiential perspectives.

RELs:4001 Biblical Hebrew I 3-4 s.h.
Same as CLSA:4901.

RELs:4002 Biblical Hebrew II 3 s.h.
Same as CLSA:4902.

RELs:4154 Magic Machines: Technology and Social Change 3 s.h.

RELs:4155 Religious Conflict: Early Modern Period 3 s.h.
Religious conflict among European Christians (Catholics, Lutherans, Calvinists, and Radicals), as well as between Christians and non-Christians from the Late Middle Ages through the Reformation of the 16th century and beyond. Same as HIST:4455.

RELs:4352 Targumic Aramaic 3 s.h.
Language used by Targums—Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Bible—for use in the study of interpretative traditions of later Jewish groups. Same as CLSA:5904.

RELs:4970 Honors Tutorial 2-3 s.h.
RELs:4975 Honors Essay 2-4 s.h.
RELs:4990 Research with Faculty 3 s.h.
Research with a faculty member on a scholarly project; discussions of primary and secondary literature; regular small-group meetings. Requirements: religious studies major.

RELs:5001 Biblical Aramaic 3 s.h.
This course introduces the basics of Biblical Aramaic grammar and syntax and provides an introduction to the Biblical lexicon. There will be extensive grammatical exercises, both in class and at home, as well as frequent opportunities to apply grammatical and lexical knowledge to the Biblical text. Recommendations: Biblical Hebrew recommended. Same as CLSA:5903.

RELs:5002 Targumic Aramaic 3 s.h.

RELs:5075 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I 3 s.h.
Operational and financing aspects of nonprofit management; mission and governance of organization; strategic planning for effective management, including finance, budget, income generation, fund-raising. Same as HMP:6360, MGMT:9150, PBAF:6278, SPST:6010, SSW:6247, URP:6278.

RELs:5076 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II 3 s.h.
Qualities for leadership of nonprofit organizations, including relationships with staff and volunteers; relationship of nonprofit and outside world; marketing, public relations, advocacy strategies for nonprofits. Requirements: for HMP:6365—HMP:6360 or MGMT:9150. Same as HMP:6365, MGMT:9160, PBAF:6279, SPST:6020, SSW:6248, URP:6279.

RELs:5200 Asian Religions in the Modern World for Graduate Students 3 s.h.
Introduction to religious traditions of Asia; framework for further studies in Asian religions; preparation to design and teach a world religions course; for Asian studies and religious studies graduate students.

RELs:5350 Genealogies of Religion 3 s.h.
Genealogies of the idea of religion, academic study of religion, and comparative study of religions; intellectual and ideological foundations of discipline; preparation to work skillfully across traditions.

RELs:5400 The Politics of Everyday Life 3 s.h.
Introduction to concepts of "everyday life" as a mainstay of cultural studies and a theoretical frame useful in diverse fields.

RELs:6040 Tiberius to Trajan arr.
Authors and topics from the first and second centuries C.E. Same as CLSL:6013.

RELs:6070 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I 3 s.h.
Operational and financing aspects of nonprofit management; mission and governance of organization; strategic planning for effective management, including finance, budget, income generation, fund-raising. Same as HMP:6360, MGMT:9150, PBAF:6278, SPST:6010, SSW:6247, URP:6278.

RELs:6075 Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II 3 s.h.
Qualities for leadership of nonprofit organizations, including relationships with staff and volunteers; relationship of nonprofit and outside world; marketing, public relations, advocacy strategies for nonprofits. Requirements: for HMP:6365—HMP:6360 or MGMT:9150. Same as HMP:6365, MGMT:9160, PBAF:6279, SPST:6020, SSW:6248, URP:6279.

RELs:6125 Classical Arabic and Grammar 3-6 s.h.
Arabic alphabet, vocabulary, and syntax; poetry, legal texts, and media Arabic; converse in formal Arabic; for students with strong interest in classical Arabic, grammar, and original texts, or research students in Islamic and Middle Eastern studies or in professional programs.
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<tr>
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<th>Credits</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:6150</td>
<td>American Religious Histories</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:6200</td>
<td>Seminar: Religious Ethics</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:6345</td>
<td>New Materialisms</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:6350</td>
<td>Gender and Religion</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:6475</td>
<td>Seminar: Reformation Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:6520</td>
<td>Seminar: South Asian Religion</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:6580</td>
<td>Seminar: Religion and Society</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:6710</td>
<td>Seminar: Approaches to Human Rights</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:6723</td>
<td>Seminar on Islamic Law and Government</td>
<td>3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:7400</td>
<td>Readings in Theology and Religious Thought</td>
<td>arr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:7450</td>
<td>Readings in History of Christianity</td>
<td>arr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:7500</td>
<td>Readings in Asian Religions</td>
<td>arr.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:7600</td>
<td>Readings in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies</td>
<td>1-3 s.h.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:7650</td>
<td>Readings in Ancient Near Eastern Religions</td>
<td>arr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:7900</td>
<td>Individual Study: Graduates</td>
<td>arr.</td>
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<td>RELS:7950</td>
<td>Thesis</td>
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