Religious Studies

Chair
- Morten Schlütter

Undergraduate major: religious studies (B.A.)
Undergraduate minors: religion and media; religious studies
Graduate degrees: M.A. in religious studies; Ph.D. in religious studies
Faculty: https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion/people/faculty
Website: https://clas.uiowa.edu/religion/

Religion is a crucial aspect of any culture or society. As the world becomes increasingly connected, understanding other people and cultures is critical, as recent events have shown. Regardless of one’s personal beliefs, or what one’s personal goals or career interests might be, taking courses in the Department of Religious Studies will enhance students’ education and help distinguish them in their field, even if they do not have the time to take a major or minor.

The Department of Religious Studies encourages multidisciplinary inquiry into religious ideas, experiences, philosophies, cultural expressions, and social movements. It offers courses on a rich array of traditions, including Buddhism and other religions in South and East Asia, ancient Judaism and early Christianity, African diaspora religions, modern European Christianity, various forms of Islam, North American religions, and new forms of religious practice that many people may not yet recognize as religions.

As a guide to some of the numerous options available within the department, the following partial list shows some thematic areas of interest. The Department of Religious Studies encourages students to talk with the director of undergraduate studies, staff members, or a faculty member to find the courses that best meet their needs.

Areas of Interest

Getting to Know the Religions and Cultures of the World

A better appreciation for the diversity that makes up the world is an important part of daily life. The department encourages students to take courses representing several different traditions and methods. This enables them to apply their studies to a wide variety of careers and opportunities that might become available.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Hours</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1001</td>
<td>Judaism, Christianity, and Islam</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1060</td>
<td>Journey Through World Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1070</td>
<td>Introduction to the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1080</td>
<td>Introduction to the New Testament</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1130</td>
<td>Introduction to Islamic Civilization</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1225</td>
<td>Medieval Religion and Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1250</td>
<td>Modern Religion and Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1350</td>
<td>Introduction to African American Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1404</td>
<td>Living Religions of the East</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1430</td>
<td>The Bible: Frequently Asked Questions</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1506</td>
<td>Introduction to Buddhism</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1670</td>
<td>Korea in the World</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1702</td>
<td>Religion in America Today</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1765</td>
<td>U.S. Latina/o/x Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1810</td>
<td>Happiness in a Difficult World</td>
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Media and Communication

Media and communication, such as popular culture, journalism, and the internet, influence the ways in which people communicate their beliefs and with whom they can communicate. These classes explore the dynamic relationship between developments in media and the expression of religious ideas and rituals.

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1041</td>
<td>African American Religion and Popular Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1050</td>
<td>Big Ideas: Introduction to Information, Society, and Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:1997</td>
<td>Harry Potter: The Mystery and Magic of Life</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2080</td>
<td>Public Life in the U.S.: Religion and Media</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2087</td>
<td>Narnia and Beyond: The Writings of C.S. Lewis</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2272</td>
<td>Gods and Superheroes: Mythologies for a Modern World</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2877</td>
<td>Sport and Religion in America</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2912</td>
<td>The Bible in Film: Hollywood and Moses</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2930</td>
<td>Digital Media and Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3745</td>
<td>Twentieth-Century African American Religion: Civil Rights to Hip Hop</td>
<td>3</td>
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Social and Cultural Dynamics

An important aspect of any society is how people understand and interact with others, particularly those who are different from us. These courses provide insight into the groups and people who make up civilizations and what constitute human rights.

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<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:2412</td>
<td>Spiritual but not Religious: The Emergence and Growth of Spirituality</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2852</td>
<td>Women in Islam and the Middle East</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2980</td>
<td>Religion and Contemporary Popular Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2986</td>
<td>Religion and Women</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3431</td>
<td>Gender and Sexuality in East Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3808</td>
<td>Malcolm X, King, and Human Rights</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3855</td>
<td>Human Rights and Islam</td>
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Health, Medicine, and Wellness

Religious beliefs are crucial to how people understand who they are, their health, and how to live the best life. They can influence medical decisions, psychology, and general well-being.

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<th>Code</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1903</td>
<td>Quest for Human Destiny</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2260</td>
<td>Hard Cases in Healthcare at the Beginning of Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2265</td>
<td>Hard Cases in Healthcare at the End of Life</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2353</td>
<td>Love: Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Art</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2674</td>
<td>Food, Body, and Belief: A Global Perspective</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2834</td>
<td>Philosophy of Religion</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2947</td>
<td>Quest II: Sex, Love, and Death</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3645</td>
<td>Buddhist Philosophy</td>
<td>3</td>
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Law, Politics, and Economics

Whether students' interests are on a local, national or international level, understanding how different religious beliefs influence the construction of cultures and their interaction with others provides a great asset.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1015</td>
<td>Global Religious Conflict and Diversity</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2289</td>
<td>Jerusalem: The Holy City</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2330</td>
<td>Wealth, Inequality, and Islam</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2486</td>
<td>Religious Coexistence and Conflict in the Middle East</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2620</td>
<td>Politics, Sex, and the Bible</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2775</td>
<td>The Bible and the Holocaust</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2855</td>
<td>Human Rights, Law, Religion, and Culture</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3267</td>
<td>Dissent and Rebellion in Islamic Societies: Was There an Arab Spring?</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3385</td>
<td>Early Modern Catholicism</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3520</td>
<td>Religious Violence and Nationalism</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3700</td>
<td>Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness I</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3701</td>
<td>Nonprofit Organizational Effectiveness II</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3845</td>
<td>Islam in Africa</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:4155</td>
<td>Religious Conflict: Early Modern Period</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:4870</td>
<td>Islamic Cultural Presence in Spain</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:4893</td>
<td>Classical Arabic: Vocabulary, Syntax, and Grammar</td>
<td>1-3</td>
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Biblical Studies/Western Antiquity

The civilizations that made up Western Antiquity, from Egypt to Rome, have influenced the development of societies throughout history. These courses are relevant to those looking for an advanced degree in the area, but their wide relevance also makes them an important part of any religious studies education.

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<tr>
<th>Code</th>
<th>Title</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RELS:1400</td>
<td>Biblical Archaeology</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2182</td>
<td>Ancient Mediterranean Religions</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2361</td>
<td>Middle East and Mediterranean: Alexander to Suleiman</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:2444</td>
<td>Cities of the Bible</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:3003</td>
<td>Classical and Hellenistic Periods I</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:3245</td>
<td>Mythology of Otherworldly Journeys</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:3247</td>
<td>Banned from the Bible: Pseudepigrapha and Apocrypha</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:3375</td>
<td>The Great Collision</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>RELS:4001</td>
<td>Biblical Hebrew I</td>
<td>3-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:4002</td>
<td>Biblical Hebrew II</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RELS:4352</td>
<td>The Dead Sea Scrolls</td>
<td>3</td>
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Programs

Undergraduate Programs of Study

Major

- Major in Religious Studies (Bachelor of Arts)

Minors

- Minor in Religion and Media
- Minor in Religious Studies

Graduate Programs of Study

Majors

- Master of Arts in Religious Studies
- Doctor of Philosophy in Religious Studies

Courses

Religious Studies Courses

RELS:1000 First-Year Seminar

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

Introduction to sacred literature, beliefs, and rituals of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as historical and contemporary relationship between these three Abrahamic religions. GE: Historical Perspectives.
RELS:1015 Global Religious Conflict and Diversity 3 s.h.
Essentials of world’s religions; focus on religion’s role in national and international events, fundamentalism, millenarianism, protest movements, religion and youth culture, religion and popular culture, contact between religious communities past and present. 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:1323 Life in the Biblical World 3 s.h.
Examination of world depicted in Old and New Testaments of the Bible; archaeological evidence, ancient art, historical accounts, geography, and Bible text used to examine background of biblical text, shedding light on different aspects of daily life in antiquity from different points of view from Late Bronze Age through Roman period. Same as CLSA:1323.

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 Living Religions of the East 3 s.h.
Religious beliefs, practices in India, China, Japan. GE: Values and Culture. Same as ASIA:1040, HIST:1610.

RELS:1410 Introduction to Indian Religions 3 s.h.
Religions with origins in the South Asian geographic region (e.g., Vedas in mid-second millennium BCE, Jainism and Buddhism from sixth to fourth centuries BCE, Sikhism in 15th century, Indian Christianity, Islam); focus on Hinduism and Buddhism; rise of varied literary forms, ritual, rise of devotional religion, Tantra, how religious practices affect Indigenous medical traditions, how these traditions developed in different South Asian regions; broad changes in South Asian religion in 20th and early 21st centuries, current politicization of religion.

RELS:1430 The Bible: Frequently Asked Questions 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 reimagining 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:1620 Bhagavad Gita: Essential Teachings of Indian Religion 3 s.h.
Students read the Bhagavad Gita and discuss its interpretations and use in classical and modern religious, literary, and political contexts; composed around 2000 years ago, it is the best known and most influential religious text in Indian history and concisely addresses war and peace, duty and righteousness, renunciation, devotion, and the nature of the universe; its been read, debated, and discussed by ancient philosophers, modern religious teachers, and political figures such as Mahatma Gandhi, the father of modern Independent India. Same as SOAS:1620, TRNS:1620.
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, cuisine, 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: The Mystery and Magic of Life 3 s.h.
Exploration of Harry Potter novels and films that offer millions of people an entrée into a world of wizards, witches, and muggles; this engrossing world created by J.K. Rowling invites readers and viewers to explore the power of human imagination, creates a space for asking questions of personal significance (What defines me as a person? What sort of person am I in the process of becoming? What are the most significant factors that are shaping my identity and destiny?); students read selections and view film segments while exploring these essential questions.

RELS:2041 Understanding "The Muslim World" 3 s.h.
Exploration of expressions and experiences of Muslims in increasingly diverse societies around the world. Same as ASIA:2041, IS:2041.

RELS:2068 Jews in Popular Culture 3 s.h.
Exploration of a wide variety of ways in which Jewish people represent themselves through production of cultural media.

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:2207 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 GHS:2265.

RELS:2272 Gods and Superheroes: Mythologies for a Modern World 3 s.h.
Movies are uniquely positioned to express religious ideas and influences in new and innovative ways; introduction to ways in which superhero movies interpret and adapt established religious themes to reach new audiences; exploration of significant issues related to mythology and society through readings and movies; analysis of important texts and themes from various established traditions and how they are combined in new ways to create unique mythologies; how modern mythologies draw attention to what society is and could be; students learn to recognize their own participation in these ongoing dialogues/debates. Recommendations: some background in religious studies helpful.

RELS:2289 Jerusalem: The Holy City 3 s.h.
Religious, political, and cultural history of Jerusalem over three millennia as a symbolic focus of three faiths—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; integration of several digital learning technologies, including digital reconstructions and Google Earth tours of Jerusalem. Same as CLSA:2489.
RELS:2330 Wealth, Inequality, and Islam 3 s.h.
Exploration of the meaning and functions of key ideas and events that have shaped economic and Islamic institutions inside and outside Muslim-majority societies; special attention to causes of inequality and other social disparity patterns and trends. GE: Diversity and Inclusion.

RELS:2353 Love: Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Art 3 s.h.
Idea of love from influential texts of the past to various aspects of contemporary culture and experience (e.g., romantic love, mystical experience, digitally mediated friendships, family relationships); idea of universal human rights; cybersex.

RELS:2361 Middle East and Mediterranean: Alexander to Suleiman 3 s.h.
GE: Historical Perspectives. Same as CLSA:2461, HIST:2461.

RELS:2412 Spiritual but not Religious: The Emergence and Growth of Spirituality 3 s.h.
The rise of people in the United States who have diverse, creative practices and beliefs, but no formal religious affiliation; the impetus behind the rejection of religion, especially by young people; ways in which these patterns reflect global mobility, cultural diversity, secularism, contemporary politics, and religious history; ethical questions about consumerist spirituality and cultural appropriation.

RELS:2420 Almost Human: Exploring Identity in Science Fiction 1.3 s.h.
What does it mean to be human? What distinguishes humans from other sorts of entities, such as cyborgs and robots? What are the ethical implications of a post-human future? Students pursue these questions through exploration of science fiction in books, short stories, film, and television.

RELS:2444 Cities of the Bible 2 s.h.
Survey of the history and archaeology of key biblical cities and the contributions they made to the formation of the Bible. Same as CLSA:2444.

RELS:2475 Islam in America 3 s.h.
Survey of Islam in America; exploration of the roots of Islam in the Atlantic world and antebellum America to the current day; urban-based African American Muslim communities; interactions between African American Muslim women and South Asian Muslim women around issues of gender; focus on Islamic political experiences and artistic expressions to explore the connections between the civil rights movement, Black Power movement, and African American music genres such as jazz; creative ways in which Muslims Americans have engaged with hip hop culture—including rap, poetry, and protest—in the wake of 9/11.

RELS:2486 Religious Coexistence and Conflict in the Middle East 3 s.h.
Examination of coexistence and conflict in the region that includes Iraq, Israel/Palestine, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen; relationship between religion and politics in the Middle East; how the region’s diverse ethnic and religious communities coexisted in the past and what now seems like a remarkably tolerant environment; investigation of questions (Did Muslims, Christians, and Jews really live together in peace? If so, how and why has that changed?); history of communal relations in the Middle East; use of this background to analyze how religion and ethnicity function in contemporary politics.

RELS:2510 Fed Up with Organized Religion 3 s.h.
explores the rise of discontent with organized religion in America and the flourishing of alternative means for understanding the meaning and purpose of life and the universe.

RELS:2540 The Walls Between Us: Historic Uses of the Bible in Defining the Other 3 s.h.
Examination of major events in Western history in which people disagreed about who deserves to be treated as human; ranging from the Crusades and the Reformation to Slavery and Women’s Suffrage, students examine how the Bible was used to expand and restrict the circle of humanity. Recommendations: some background in religion and religious studies is helpful.

RELS:2552 Atheism, Agnosticism, and Religion 3 s.h.
History and analysis of religious skepticism in Western culture from the classical period through modern times. Same as CLSA:2552.

RELS:2620 Politics, Sex, and the Bible 3 s.h.
Examination and analysis of the role of the Bible in contemporary culture; how different groups can read the exact same passages, yet reach different conclusions about how they and others should live. Recommendations: basic familiarity with the Bible or religion. GE: Diversity and Inclusion.

RELS:2674 Food, Body, and Belief: A Global Perspective 3 s.h.
Exploration of local, national, and global forces that shape food consumption, body image, and spiritual practices. Taught in English. Same as GHS:2674.

RELS:2700 Sacred World of Native Americans 3 s.h.
GE:Values and Culture. Same as NAIS:2700.

RELS:2775 The Bible and the Holocaust 3 s.h.
Religious and philosophic implications of the Holocaust viewed through survivors’ writings.

RELS:2834 Philosophy of Religion 3 s.h.
Historical to contemporary treatments of central issues; nature of faith, existence and nature of God, science and religion, ethics and religion, miracles, religious experience, interpretation of religious texts. Requirements: sophomore or higher standing. Same as PHIL:2534.

RELS:2852 Women in Islam and the Middle East 3 s.h.
Women in the Islamic community and in non-Muslim Middle Eastern cultures; early rise of Islam to modern times; references to women in the Qur’an and Sunnah, stories from Islamic history; women and gender issues. GE: International and Global Issues; Values and Culture. Same as GWSS:2052.

RELS:2855 Human Rights, Law, Religion, and Culture 3 s.h.
Application of historical and analytical approaches to explore social norms, political principles, religious teachings, cultural practices, and legal doctrines that have shaped the debate on human rights in the global context and within Islamic societies; analysis of historical accounts, legal documents, and past and current events to introduce students to human rights beyond its international law framework.

RELS:2877 Sport and Religion in America 3 s.h.
Sport as a religion; religiosity in sports; examination of religion and sport as connected in important ways in American society. Same as SPST:2077.
RELS:2912 The Bible in Film: Hollywood and Moses  3 s.h.
How Hollywood has interpreted the Biblical stories of Adam and Eve, Moses, and David the King.

RELS:2930 Digital Media and Religion  3 s.h.
Influences of digital media on religion and spirituality today. GE: Historical Perspectives. Same as COMM:2079.

RELS:2947 Quest II: Sex, Love, and Death  3 s.h.
Examination of ancient and modern responses to horrors associated with death; includes films, readings from the Hebrew Bible, J.D. Salinger, and Ernest Hemingway.

RELS:2980 Religion and Contemporary Popular Culture  3 s.h.
Varied topics on the intersection of religion and popular culture; may include film, television, music, and religions in North America or Asia.

RELS:2986 Religion and Women  3 s.h.
Sexism and its disavowal in biblical narrative, law, wisdom texts, Gospels, epistles; contemporary impact. GE: Values and Culture.

RELS:3003 Classical and Hellenistic Periods I  3 s.h.
Readings in Greek literature of the Classical and Hellenistic periods. Prerequisites: CLSG:2002. Same as CLSG:3003.

RELS:3055 Death, Dying, and Beyond in Asian Religions  3 s.h.
Survey of cultural and religious approaches to the dying process, post-death rituals, and conceptions about the afterlife in different religions in Asia. Same as ASIA:3055.

RELS:3129 Native American Prophets and Prophecy  3 s.h.
Religious movements, effects of prophecies on followers of religious movements, and resulting tensions with Americans; powerful visions described as messages from a spirit being experienced by several 19th-century Native Americans after waking from coma-like states—wonderful prophecies of the restoration of Native American world to what it once was before American colonization, prophecies leading to religious movements that called for return to traditional practices, rejection of many elements of white American culture, and warnings of an impending destruction of the world.

RELS:3190 Medieval to Modern: The Birth of Protestantism  3 s.h.
Same as HIST:3190.

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; orthodoxy, 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. fictionalized 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:3247.

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:3644 Gandhi and His Legacy  0-1,3 s.h.
In-depth introduction to the life, ideas, and ongoing impact of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi (1869-1948); from his conservative upbringing to his early career as a lawyer, his transformative experiences, and self-transformation into a charismatic mahatma ("great soul"), the pursuit of political and social liberation through non-violent civil disobedience, the assertion of human rights, and the quest for sustainable lifestyles that uphold the common good and protect the natural environment; evolution of Gandhi's thought and activism and his legacy. Same as HIST:3644, SOAS:3644.

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, SW: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, SW:3600.

RELS:3704 Egyptian Art 3 s.h.
Sculpture, painting, architecture, and luxury arts from Pyramid Age to Death of Cleopatra. Same as ARTH:3320.

RELS:3714 Anthropology of Religion 3 s.h.
Approaches; religious roles; shamanism, witchcraft, curing; mythology; place of religion in social and cultural change. Same as ANTH:3114.

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-Century African American Religion: Civil Rights to Hip Hop 3 s.h.
Twentieth-century African American religious history; major political and cultural movements, such as civil rights, Black power, Black feminism/womanism, hip hop. 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:3845 Islam in Africa 4 s.h.
African Islamic history beginning with earliest Muslim migrants from Arabia to Ethiopia in early 7th century C.E. to dawn of 21st century; focus on historical development of Islam on African continent, specific regions, and particular themes; part of Islamic Studies Virtual Curriculum and Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) CourseShare Program. Same as HIST:3745, IS:3745.

RELS:3855 Human Rights and Islam 3 s.h.
Human rights in religious and secular discourse, seventh century to present; Islamic law, human rights law, religion, politics. GE: International and Global Issues. Same as IS:3855.

RELS:3976 American Indian Environmentalism 3 s.h.
Clean water, plant diversity, animal health as worldwide issues; Native American relationships and responsibilities to the living things of their homelands—from the earth itself to the raindrops that fall from the sky—and how those relationships have been altered in the last 150 years; explore innovative Native American efforts to restore their relationships to plants, animals, and landscapes that have been damaged by resource development, manufacturing, population growth, and political interests. Same as NAIS:3276.

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

RELS:4002 Biblical Hebrew II 4 s.h.
Same as CLSA:4902.

RELS:4155 Religious Conflict: Early Modern Period3 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 The Dead Sea Scrolls 3 s.h.
Introduction to the Dead Sea Scrolls; reading of the scrolls in English translation; examination of Qumran site archaeology; survey of broader sociopolitical context of Second Temple Judaism (586 B.C.E. to 135 C.E.) out of which the scrolls emerged. Same as CLSA:4452.

RELS:4730 Religion and Environmental Ethics 3 s.h.
How humans conceptualize the biophysical environment through religious beliefs and practices; how images of the environment influence people's activities, how they are used by grassroots environmental movements. Requirements: junior or senior standing. Same as ANTH:4130.

RELS:4870 Islamic Cultural Presence in Spain 3 s.h.
Islamic history and culture in the Iberian Peninsula from Middle Ages to present. Taught in Spanish. Requirements: one literature or culture course taught in Spanish numbered SPAN:3200 or above. Same as SPAN:4870.

RELS:4893 Classical Arabic: Vocabulary, Syntax, and Grammar 1-3 s.h.

RELS:4930 Internship in Research on Rights and Remedial Justice 1-3 s.h.
Faculty supervised research experience in human rights remedial justice.

RELS:4950 Senior Majors Seminar 3 s.h.
Issues central to academic study of religion.


RELS:4970 Honors Tutorial 2-3 s.h.

RELS:4975 Honors Essay 2-4 s.h.

RELS:5001 Biblical Aramaic 4 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. Requirements: Biblical Hebrew recommended. Same as CLSA:5903.

RELS:5002 Targumic Aramaic 4 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:5067 Readings in Islamic Studies 3 s.h.
Current scholarship in the field of Islamic studies; major works in areas such as modern Islamic thought, Islamic legal and philosophical traditions, religion and politics.

RELS:5100 Teaching and Public Engagement 1-3 s.h.
Critical importance of educating people about religion within increasingly globalized and digitized contexts; preparation to excel as classroom teachers and facilitators of cross-religious dialogue in public sphere.

RELS:5200 Varieties of Religion in the Contemporary World 3 s.h.
Limited content of multiple religious traditions from different parts of contemporary world; conversing knowledgeably about global religious diversity; preparation to design and teach a world religions course.

RELS:5300 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 skilfully across traditions.

RELS:5400 Methods and Theories in the Study of Religion 3 s.h.
Principal methods, theories in academic study of religion.

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.
Students who have not previously taken Arabic courses start by learning the Arabic alphabet with emphasis on writing and pronunciation; students who have taken Modern Standard Arabic courses learn Classical Arabic vocabulary, syntax, and grammar before reading selections of original Arabic text from the area of their research interest (i.e., law, poetry and literature, philosophy, religious texts, etc.); for students with different levels of familiarity with Arabic language.

RELS:6150 American Religious Histories 3 s.h.
Focused examination of the variety and vagaries of religious experiences in the Americas, 16th to 21st centuries. Same as HIST:6250.

RELS:6200 Seminar: Religious Ethics 3 s.h.

RELS:6350 Gender and Religion 3 s.h.
What contemporary religious and spiritual groups and their members believe about sex, sexuality, and gender; how they define and redefine what it means to be a “man” and a “woman”; exploration of contemporary “conservative” and “progressive” cosmologies and theologies; underlying beliefs that construct these perspectives and the impact on individual and group practices; broader implications of individual and group beliefs and practices on national and global policies. Same as GWSS:6350.

RELS:6475 Seminar: Reformation Culture arr.
Culture and thought of 16th-century Europe. Same as HIST:6475.

RELS:6520 Seminar: South Asian Religion 3 s.h.
Topics in South Asian religions. Same as ASIA:6520.

RELS:6580 Seminar: Religion and Society 3 s.h.

RELS:6625 Seminar: Religion and Health 3 s.h.
Examination of global perspectives on relationships between religion, health, disease, living well, and dying. Same as ANTH:6625, GHS:6625.

RELS:6710 Seminar: Approaches to Human Rights 3 s.h.
Various theoretical approaches to human rights discourse and analysis of connections between theory and practice; investigation of a number of ideas and events that influenced discourse and institutions of human rights since the Enlightenment; key cases involving women's rights, Indigenous peoples’ rights, and rights of other disempowered social groups across culture and throughout history; for students interested in the study of economics, history, law, philosophy, politics, and religion.

RELS:6723 Seminar on Islamic Law and Government 3 s.h.
Islamic legal and political legacy from formative period until modern time; critical analysis of logic and context of development; development of jurisprudential, legal, and political literature; overview of theories and practices of governance in Islam beginning with Caliphate system and ending with modern nation-state models. Same as LAW:9723.

RELS:7100 Readings in American Religions arr.

RELS:7200 Readings in Religious Ethics arr.

RELS:7260 French Paleography 1,3 s.h.
Independent study of original French writings.

RELS:7300 Critical Theories of Religion 1-4 s.h.
Exploration of theories that pertain to religion with an emphasis on contemporary critical theory.

RELS:7400 Readings in Theology and Religious Thought arr.

RELS:7450 Readings in History of Christianity arr.

RELS:7500 Readings in Asian Religions arr.

RELS:7600 Readings in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies 1-3 s.h.
Advanced works and/or texts in primary languages (Arabic, Persian, etc.) in the broad field of Islamic and Middle Eastern studies. Requirements: proficiency in Modern Standard Arabic.

RELS:7650 Readings in Ancient Near Eastern Religions arr.
Ancient Near Eastern religious texts; focus on their place in ancient Near Eastern history and religious thought.

RELS:7900 Individual Study: Graduates arr.

RELS:7950 Thesis arr.