

Religion

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The goal of the study of religion at a secular college is religious literacy. Religious literacy, an important dimension of cultural literacy, entails both a cognitive component (knowledge of religions and of the religious dimension of culture) and proficiencies (the acquiring of skills relevant to the analysis of religion). Courses in religion have the objective of conveying knowledge about the world's religion, and of developing skills of analysis, interpretation, and communication.

An individually designed combined major which integrates the study of religion with work in another department can be arranged.

Learning Goals:

- 1) Students who major in Religion will gain an understanding of the breadth and diversity of religious traditions throughout the world, building the capacity to understand the roles religion has played in varied cultural and historical contexts.
- 2) Students who major in Religion will gain substantive, in-depth knowledge of at least two different religious traditions in their multiple dimensions through the study of such things as primary texts, theological content, socio-historical development, and that tradition's manifestations in different cultural locations.
- 3) Students who major in Religion will acquire sophistication in the historiographical, methodological, and theoretical challenges of studying particular traditions, and the category of "religion" in general.
- 4) Students who major in Religion will be able to carry out independent research. Specifically, they will be able to:
 - formulate a sophisticated question
 - conduct the appropriate research in order to answer that question
 - present their answers to that question in writing that meets the highest standards of conceptual clarity and readable prose.
 - discuss orally the subject matter of their research in a substantive and precise manner
 - locate their own methodological approach to their research question within the broader field and articulate the contributions and limitations of their chosen method.

Distribution: Courses completed in religion apply to the humanities and cultural pluralism (selected courses) distribution areas.

Total credit requirement for a Religion major: 36

The Religion major:

- 36 Credits
- Required Courses
 - Religion 203, 448, 490 or 498
 - Six elective courses
 - At least one course in comparative religion (see course list below)
 - At least two at 300-level
 - At least three courses, including one at the 300 level, must form a concentration
 - Concentration must be formed prior to fall preregistration junior year
- Other notes
 - A maximum of two courses can be approved from outside the major including transfer credit, study abroad, and Whitman courses offered outside of the Religion Department that substantively engage religion. If a student is double majoring, these courses may also be counted from another major program. These courses will count as elective courses and may not be used to fulfill the requirement of at least two 300-level courses.
 - Only one 100 level course may apply toward the major

- Study of appropriate language is highly recommended
- No courses may be taken P-D-F
- Senior Requirements
 - Religion 448, 490 or 498
 - Thesis written in concentration area
 - 25-30 pages
 - Oral examination
 - Thesis defense
 - May include comprehensive questions regarding the major
- Honors
 - Students do not apply for admission to candidacy for honors
 - Students must submit a proposal for their thesis or project
 - Must be submitted within the first six weeks of the two-semester period in which student is eligible
 - Accumulated at least 87 credits
 - Completed two semesters of residency at Whitman.
 - Cumulative GPA of at least 3.300 on all credits earned at Whitman College
 - Major GPA of at least 3.500
 - Complete a written thesis or research project prepared exclusively for the satisfaction of this program
 - Earn a grade of at least A- on the honors thesis or project and the honors thesis course
 - Pass the senior assessment with distinction
 - Chair of the department will notify the Registrar of students attaining Honors no later than the beginning of week 12 of the semester.
 - An acceptable digital copy of the Honors Thesis must be submitted to Penrose Library no later than Reading Day

The Religion minor:

- 20 Credits
- Required Courses
 - Religion 203
 - At least one 300-level course
 - At least one course in comparative religion (see course list below)
- Other notes
 - Only one 100-level course may be applied toward the minor
 - No courses taken P-D-F

Courses designated Comparative:

Religion 100 *Introduction to Religion*
 Religion 110 *Religion and the Senses*
 Religion 115 *Consuming Divinity: Religion and Food*
 Religion 116-118 *Comparative Studies in Religion*
 Religion 118/Classics 116 *ST: Religion and Disability in the Ancient Mediterranean*
 Religion 153 *Religion and Native America*
 Religion 170 *The End Times: Representations of the Apocalypse*
 Religion 223 *Religion and the Spirit of Capitalism*
 Religion 224 *Anthropology of Religion*
 Religion 236 *Comparative Scriptures*
 Religion 270 *Race and Religion*
 Religion 291 *ST: Gods at the Movies: Religion in Bollywood Film*

Religion 292 *ST: Religion and the Environment in South Asia*
 Religion/Anthropology 303 *Religion and Gender in Global Context*
 Religion/Film Media Studies 307 *Mediating Religions*
 Religion 325 *Religion & Politics in East Asia*

 Religion/Anthropology 350 *Missionaries and other Anthropologists*
 Religion 358 *Feminist and Liberation Theologies*
 Religion 370 *Religion and Disenchantment in 20th-century Literature*

The Religion+French major:

- All the required 36 Credits for a Religion major
- A total of 24 credits, comprised as follows:
 - At least 16 credits taught in French at the 200 level or above, or equivalent.
 - Up to 12 credits comprised of any combination of the following:
 - Up to 4 AP /IB credits (see note)
 - Up to 8 credits from approved courses taught in English
 - Up to 4 credits “double-dipped” with approved courses counted toward another major or minor program
 - Up to 8 credits transferred from off-campus studies or another institution
- Attainment of B2 or Advanced Low level on a recognized language proficiency assessment (DELF, ACTFL, etc.).
- Two or more of the following integrative components with the primary major :
 - A thesis topic that explicitly incorporates a significant portion of French/Francophone content, broadly understood (textual, geographic, theoretical, historical, etc.)
 - A grade of B or higher in a course in Religion taught in French (normally only an option through off-campus studies)
 - A course in Religion that has been approved as a “double dip” (see note)
 - An internship related to Religion major, conducted in a French setting
 - An oral presentation of the senior project (or equivalent) in French, for a general public
 - Portfolio + reflective essay in French
- Complete the senior self evaluation survey about their combined major experience.
- **Honors in a Religion+French** major will be determined according to the criteria of the Religion major.
- **Notes:**
 - Certain majors may allow for a “double dip”, such as:
 - An approved course taught in English that counts towards both the major requirements and the French requirements.
 - A course completed in French off campus that counts towards both the major requirements and the French requirements.
 - Within the 8-credit transfer limitation, any university-level courses taught entirely in French may count toward the French requirements, regardless of topic.
 - Religion+French candidates have a major advisor in Religion, and a second advisor from the French department who works with them to define and assess the integrative component. Students should approach a French advisor as soon after declaring their primary major as possible.

100 Introduction to Religion

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

An introduction both to religion as a reality of human history, culture, and experience, and to the study of religion as a field in the humanities and social sciences. Topics include the nature of religion; theological; and social scientific theories of religion; sacred scriptures, East and West; religious thought about the nature of ultimate reality, the human condition, and the path to salvation in several traditions. Not a survey of world religions, but an introduction to religion using cross-cultural materials and a variety of approaches. Three class meetings per week. Open only to first- and second-year students.

110 Religion and the Senses

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

Looking across a range of religious traditions, this course examines the modes of the human senses in relation to religious experience, drawing on both primary and secondary literature. We will ask such questions as: are the senses acting as a means allowing for perception of the divine, or some kind of experience or contact? Are they a medium for self-discipline, in either a positive sense through the cultivation of a pious self, or negatively, through denial? Are the senses serving as a metaphor, and, if so, to what end? We will also interrogate the boundaries and relationships between senses. Open only to first- and second-year students.

115 Consuming Divinity: Religion and Food

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course takes food as a central node around which to explore different religious traditions. We explore why food plays such a big role in the constitution of religious identities, social bodies, and ethical systems throughout the world. Topics will include food prohibitions and taboos; rituals of fasting and feasting; the ethics of eating and provisioning; food's role in healing, sacrifice, and myth; and diverse foodways that span a variety of sites, religious practices, and historical time periods. *Open only to first- and second-year students.*

116-118 Comparative Studies in Religion

4 credits

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion. Topics for the sections vary from semester to semester and year to year, depending on the particular interests of the instructors, but every course will consider some aspect of the phenomenon of religion and study it in a comparative perspective. Open only to first- and second-year students. Any current offerings follow.

116 ST: Modern Mysticism: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam

Fall

Chubb-Confer

4 credits

Yoga classes, meditation retreats, inspirational Rumi quotes - many of the markers of contemporary spirituality are drawn from the traditions of "Eastern" religions such as Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam, yet also present themselves as options for those who reject the notion of organized religion. In this course, we will investigate the relationship between "New Age" movements, "spiritual-but-not-religious" identities, and the religious traditions they interpret and contest. From Sufi societies to the Beatles to Burning Man, we will examine the tension between tradition and modernity, and delve into issues of religion and race, gender, cultural appropriation, capitalism, digital/online culture, and community. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race and Ethnicity Studies major or minor or the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major. *Open only to first- and second-year students.* Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

117 ST: Apocalypse

Spring

Smith

4 credits

The end of the world has felt imminent for some time now. The biblical Prophets Enoch and Ezra's visions of the earth held in judgment, Virgil's declaration that a golden age has been realized in the reign of Augustus, Revelation's visions of Rome buried and burned for its imperial evils, and environmental

ruptures in apocalyptic films like *Children of Men* and *The Leftovers* each demonstrate an enduring fixation with the calamitous end of this world and the introduction of a “new earth” potentially rid of suffering. How might climate change—experienced as a slowly unfolding series of plagues, disasters, and deaths—engage with concepts like judgment, justice, and hope? If we consider the root meaning of “apocalypse” as a “revelation” or “unveiling,” what does the current ecological crisis reveal about our world? This class analyzes ancient texts alongside Modern art, music, and film to explore such questions. May be taken for credit toward the Film & Media Studies or toward the humanistic inquiry requirement for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major. May be elected as Classics 117. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

153 Religion and Native America

Fall

Thayne

4 credits

When Europeans first arrived in the Americas, they did not typically recognize Indigenous rituals, beliefs, and practices as “religion.” Over time, however, European Enlightenment categories such as “natural religion” were applied to Indigenous practices, with significant implications. This course will be both an excavation of the category of religion and a history of religion in Native America, including its contemporary setting. We will consider how religious, anthropological, and other Euroamerican categories have influenced and been involved in the production of “Indigenous religion” and Indigeneity in North America, as well as ways these categories have been co-constituted with/as/against race. The course will also focus on Native American engagement with Christianity, missionary work to Indigenous peoples, Native “conversion,” and U.S. reform efforts, such as federal boarding schools. We will consider how religion has functioned within the U.S. legal system, particularly in cases where Indigenous peoples have sought to protect their lands and practices under the rubric of religion. Particular attention will be given to religion in this region, with sections on Washat, or the Seven Drums religion of the Plateau peoples, First Salmon ceremonies of Pacific NW peoples, the missionary work of Myron Eells (son of Whitman Seminary founder Cushing Eells), and the missionary efforts of Marcus and Narcissa Whitman—namesakes of Whitman College—among the Cayuse, Walla Walla, and Umatilla people, and the complicated issue of memorializing and remembering the so-called “Whitman Massacre” and legacy. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor. May be elected as Anthropology 153. Open only to first and second year students.

170 The End Times: Representations of the Apocalypse

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

How has the apocalypse been imagined in various religious traditions? How have those apocalyptic visions been inscribed into the popular imagination? This course considers how the end of the world has been understood in the context of different traditions, taking a comparative approach in studying apocalypse as a genre, a means of persuasion, a worldview, a motif, and more. Course materials will include texts as well as film and television media. Possible sources and topics may include: the biblical books of Daniel and Revelation, selections from the Qur’an, apocalyptically-oriented new religious movements, the phenomenon of doomsday preppers, the *Left Behind* series of Christian thrillers and accompanying films, and *The Leftovers* book and television series. Open only to first- and second-year students.

180 James Baldwin’s America

Spring

Schultz

4 credits

The work of African American writer James Baldwin has probed the enduring contradictions of America’s troubled history with race and the legacies of slavery. Drawing from both his literary and non-fiction work, this course explores how Baldwin excavates, confronts, and rewrites his own story and the story of America through the lens of religion, race, and sexuality. We will consider the political dimensions of Baldwin’s autobiographical writing and study the ways Baldwin reads the racial imaginary of literature and film. We will examine the ambiguities of Baldwin’s Pentecostal upbringing, something he rebelled against yet continued to deploy rhetorically in his writing. Students will learn to analyze how forms of literary and visual representation produce, rank, and value racial

difference. The course will also incorporate the perspectives of Baldwin's interlocutors, in addition to exploring contemporary voices that engage enduring problems of race and its entanglements with religion. May be elected as Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies 180.

203 What is Religion?

Fall

Smith

4 credits

What is religion, and why is its study important in the twenty-first century? This course engages students with classic and contemporary theories about religion, and considers a variety of methods in the transdisciplinary field of religious studies.

205 American Islam

Fall

Chubb-Confer

4 credits

Who are American Muslims? Can Islam be an American religion? This course interrogates the history of American Islam and Muslims. Examining the religion of Islam within the American context offers a key opportunity to consider its intersections with the categories of race, gender, immigration and nationhood, and multiculturalism. Topics covered may include Islam of African peoples enslaved in the Americas, immigrant and diaspora communities, Black Islams such as the Nation of Islam and the Moorish Science Temple, and Islamophobia and the racialization of Muslims. No prior background in the study of Islam required. Course materials include readings and films. Assignments include papers and presentations. May be taken for credit toward the Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

207 Islamic Traditions

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course provides an overview of the religious tradition of Islam in a global context. We will encounter a lived tradition: one that is constantly defined, redefined, and contested through the beliefs and practices of Muslims in interpretation of scripture, ritual life, literature, art, and other modes of expression. Themes that may receive attention include foundational sources and literatures such as the Qur'an, hadith, and shari'a, as well as the role of the Prophet Muhammad, Sunni and Shi'i traditions, political Islam, and Islam in America. The sources for the course include both readings and films. May be taken for credit toward the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major.

217 The Qur'an

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course offers an exploration of the Qur'an, the scripture of Islam. In introducing the text, we will examine the historical and literary context in which it was revealed to the Prophet Muhammad in seventh century Arabia. Through close reading we will survey the many messages, themes, and literary and poetic styles found in the text itself. Special attention will also be given to the range of methods and approaches that Muslims have used in interpreting the Qur'an, and to the role played by the text in ritual life.

219 Modern Jewish Thought

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course surveys the ways Jews and Jewish thought have navigated the intellectual, political, and spiritual challenges of modernity. From the Alhambra Decree of 1492 which expelled Jews from Christian Spain, to Jewish emancipation in the 19th-century Europe, to the Holocaust in the 20th-century, and finally to the 1948 formation of the state of Israel, modern Jewish experiences constitute an alternative modernity, one that draws from and profoundly challenges European enlightenment universalism. This story of clash and confluence will begin with the excommunication of Baruch Spinoza, the so-called "first modern Jew," and our investigations will move through pathways of Jewish enlightenment (Moses Mendelssohn) and existentialism, Zionism and the Jewish Question, theological feminisms, and ending with Levinas and Derrida. This course will survey the diverse landscapes of Jewish modernity, with special attention to dynamics between secularism and traditionalism, individualism and nationalism, exile and homeland, and Judaism and Christianity. Course taught in English. Students electing to take

the German Studies section will complete some reading in the original German and may complete some writing, and discussion assignments in German. May be elected as German Studies 219.

220 Introduction to Christian Thought

Spring

Schultz

4 credits

This course aims to acquaint students with a working knowledge of the vocabulary, topics, and history of Christian Thought. What are its sources, patterns, and forms of meaning making? What does Christianity have to say about God, bodies, reason, faith, sex, desire, ecology, life, and death? The readings for this course will draw from the Bible, a range of canonical and contemporary theological voices, literature, and philosophy. Students will acquire theological literacy in the Christian tradition, the ability to detect and discern Christianity's historical entanglements with other discourses, and the knowledge needed to negotiate ongoing cultural contestations over religion.

223 Religion and the Spirit of Capitalism

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

As global capitalism reaches into every corner of human life, what role does religion play in the reproduction of social inequalities, labor practices, and exploitative economies? Did religion sow the seeds of capitalism? How might religious traditions and practices be used to critique capitalism and reimagine the culture it created? In this course, we delve into the entanglements between religion and the dominant economic form of the modern world: capitalism. Areas covered include classical social theories of religion and capitalism (Marx, Weber, Tocqueville, Durkheim); contemporary examples of interactions between religious practice and capitalist processes; and the mobilization of religious traditions in critiquing and resisting capitalism. Topics may include the “Confucian ethic” and economic growth in East Asia; Islamic financial institutions; the effect of Pentecostalism’s explosive growth on the economic experiences of African and Latin American communities; the marketization and commodification of religion; and more. May be elected as Anthropology 223.

224 Anthropology of Religion

Fall

Yuan

4 credits

This course explores lived religions through an anthropological lens. Through a wide range of ethnographic readings both classical and contemporary, we will delve into topics like myth, ritual, magic, witchcraft, ghosts, healing, religious experience and social movements, while examining how religion intersects with politics, race, gender/sexuality, and economics in diverse socio-cultural contexts. Through the course, we will also take stock of how theories of religion have been integral to the development of anthropological thought, contributing to comparative methodologies and cross-cultural ethnography. In addition to learning about global religious cultures, students will design a locally-focused research project to better understand our own region's religious landscape. May be elected as Anthropology 224.

225 Global Christianity

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course examines Christianity in its multiplicity and diversity, from its origins in a pluralistic ancient Mediterranean world to the spread of Christian practices and cultural forms throughout the globe. Through engagement with anthropology, history, theology, and literary texts, we will explore how various Christian texts, concepts, institutions, practices, and narratives have circulated among different populations in distinct socio-historical contexts. The course centers around two key questions: How has Christianity been formed and reformed through its global encounters? And how have these encounters in turn shaped the world as we know it? May be elected as Anthropology 225.

236 Comparative Scriptures

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course takes a comparative thematic approach to reading across the three scriptures of the Abrahamic traditions—the Hebrew Bible, the New Testament, and the Qur'an. Although they originate at different moments in history, in the context of different religious traditions, a common vocabulary of themes, narratives, genres, and

poetics appears across all three. We will take a thematic approach by reading the scriptures as literature, in conversation with one another, and in so doing, raising the issue of the possibilities and limitations of a comparative perspective.

260 The Secularization of Whitman College

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

Whitman College was originally founded as a seminary named after two missionaries who were sent to this region to convert the Cayuse, Umatilla, and Walla Walla peoples to Christianity. Though the college now has no official ties to Christianity, we continue to bear the names of the Whitmans, house artifacts collected by our missionary founders, repent of our mascots, mark and wash our monuments, and have a mission statement outlining our goals and aspirations. Is Whitman haunted? Are all secularisms haunted? In this class we will consider the present politics of Whitman College in light of our archives, collections, and relationships, as well as broader scholarship on religion and secularism. May be elected as Politics 260.

270 Race and Religion

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

How are race and religion related? If we reject the idea of race as a fixed biological essence and think of it instead as a product of human history, how do we understand religion's role in the historical production of race? This course explores the ways religions reinforce and resist practices of racialization, and further asks how religious identity itself comes to be understood in racial, ethnic, and/or nationalist terms. The course will examine pre-modern and modern forms of anti-Semitism, Orientalism and Islamophobia; it will ask whether the caste system in Hindu South Asia can or should be understood in terms of race; and it will take up religion's complex entanglements in the slave trade, the plantation system, and European settler colonialism in the Americas. We will read from the primary source historical texts (Valladolid Debate), a selection of foundational theorists (such as Sylvia Wynter, B.R. Ambedkar, Hannah Arendt, Edward Said and Frantz Fanon), and a range of contemporary voices and perspectives. May be elected a Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies 270.

290-292 Special Topics in the Academic Study of Religion

2-4 credits

One-time offerings of studies of selected authors, themes, or religious traditions at the intermediate level. Any current offerings follow.

290 ST: The Bible and the Body

Spring

Smith

4 credits

This course concerns two primary bodies: the corpus of diverse literary traditions commonly known to some as "The Bible," and the disabled body, an object of constant delineation and discursive construction within biblical traditions. The Bible, a library of ancient texts written over the course of a millennium from a variety of social contexts, will be subjected to a literary and historical autopsy, as we investigate its constituent parts, multiplicity of forms, and the conditions of its growth and development. In the Bible, bodies are under constant creation, maintenance, and negotiation. blind prophets, barren matriarchs, spirit-possessed demoniacs, and stinking corpses raised from the grave blanket the tradition with extraordinary bodies. Drawing on insights from Disability Studies, this class will think with biblical narratives and prescriptions about deviant bodies to interrogate the historical and cultural conditions that produce disability and to explore the ways biblical discourses of disablement are deployed today. May be taken for credit toward the humanistic inquiry requirement for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major. May be elected as Classics 200. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

291 ST: Gods at the Movies: Religion in Bollywood Film

Spring

Chubb-Confer

4 credits

In this course we will approach the study of religion through the song, dance, and spectacle of Bollywood cinema, which has shaped popular visual cultures in South Asia and the international South Asian diaspora

for several decades and counting. We will consider the relationship of Bollywood film as popular entertainment to visual worship practices, gender politics, nationalism, class and caste, political ideology, social movements, and celebrity. By examining Hinduism, Islam, and other religions of South Asia through their visual representation on the big screen, we will analyze how Bollywood films and the film industry have shaped the aspirations, fears, desires, aesthetics, and violence of inter-religious encounters in modern South Asia. Required weekly film screenings. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor or the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

292 ST: Religion and the Environment in South Asia

Spring

Chubb-Confer

4 credits

The relationship of religion and environmental and ecological concerns has acquired a particular urgency in the era of climate crisis - but religious thinking about humanity's relationship to the non-human has a long history, especially in South Asia. In this course we will explore Hindu, Buddhist, Jain, and Muslim traditions as they relate to the convergence of the natural and super-natural worlds, from tiger-taming saints to river deities to modern conservation strategies around sacred locales. Areas of focus will include pilgrimage and place (mountains, rivers, forests); ritual practice (trees, stones, animals, plants); animals (monkeys, tigers, elephants, horses); artistic and literary representations (eco-poetics, animal fables); and a broader consideration of how the fields of religious studies and environmental humanities can be mutually enriching. May be taken for credit toward the South Asia or humanistic inquiry requirement for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or the paradigms requirement for the Environmental Humanities major. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

303 Religion and Gender in Global Context

Spring

Schultz

4 credits

This course examines issues of gender and religion as they intersect with global political discourses about women's rights and competing definitions of agency. The study of global religions have been transformed in important ways by encounters with postcolonial and feminist scholarship; similarly, the persistent interest in religious forms of life have shaped how scholars think about gender, sexuality, and feminism in transnational contexts. In this course, we will explore how these dialogues between feminism, postcolonial studies, and religious studies may inform and transform our understandings of categories like "women" and "religion." Questions explored will include: why have women's bodies and forms of religious dress become charged sites of these negotiations? What assumptions concerning moral agency, freedom, and public/private space invest these sites with meaning in the first place? Why does the sensibility of being modern and politically progressive depend so heavily on particular representations of the appropriate roles and behaviors of women and religion? May be elected as Anthropology 303. May be taken for credit towards the Gender Studies major or minor. *Recommended prerequisites:* one course in Anthropology, Religion, or Gender Studies.

304 Muslim Bodies

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course considers the roles of bodies and embodiment as related to the religious tradition of Islam. What is the role of the body in Islamic thought and practice? How are different bodies understood and treated in Islamic contexts? In what ways might the category of Islam as a religion intersect with race? Themes that may receive attention include ritual performance via the body, fashion and clothing, gender, sexuality, disability, race, and theoretical discourse of embodiment. The basics of Islam will not be covered in the course; while there are no prerequisites, it is highly recommended that students have prior course experience relating to Islam, or in Religion, Gender Studies, or Indigeneity, Race, And Ethnicity Studies. May be taken for credit toward the Middle East area for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major, Gender Studies major or minor, or Indigeneity, Race, and Ethnicity Studies major or minor.

307 Mediating Religions

Fall

Osborne

4 credits

This course will engage with philosophy, religious studies, phenomenological theory, post-colonial and cultural studies scholarship in order to critically analyze mediated religion and other parts of social life on a global scale. We will consider the many meanings of mediation, from the larger social level of mass communication to the individual level of the body, in which larger beliefs are individually mediated through ritual and performance. Themes that may receive attention include: the use of electronic fatwas in modern Muslim societies; the rise of American televisual evangelism; the global and local markets for religious cultural products; the representation of religious identities—particularly the rise of Islamophobia—in media; and the prominence of fundamentalist and nationalist religious politics across the globe. Lectures, discussions, and tests. May be elected as Film and Media Studies 307. When Film and Media Studies 307 is not offered, Religion 307 may be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor. May be taken for credit toward the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major.

310 Hearing Islam

Spring

Osborne

4 credits

This course explores the ways in which Islam has been conceived, represented, and contested through sound. How does hearing or saying affect the practice of religion? What makes a particular sound religious, with regard to either its production or its experience? Topics will include the call to prayer, recitation of the Qur'an, the “problem” of music in Islam, and genres of Islamic music from a wide range of historical and cultural contexts (such as ghazals--love poems set as songs --and Islamic rap, for example), sermons, and other audio artifacts. The course will draw on both reading and listening assignments. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major or minor or the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major. May be elected as Music 310.

321 Islamic Mysticism

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

This course examines the concepts, literatures, and practices associated with mysticism in Islam (Sufism), and the lives of related figures. We will draw on both close reading of mystical literatures, as well as studying the integration of the practices and individuals into Sufi orders into society in a variety of geographical and historical contexts.

325 Religion and Politics in East Asia

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

How has the modern development of religion in East Asia shaped the region's historical experiences and contemporary life-worlds? In this course, we examine how an imported concept — “religion” (宗教) — has transformed the sociopolitical landscapes of greater China, Japan, and Korea. With readings from anthropology, religious studies, and other related fields, the class will explore thematic topics set in contemporary East Asian contexts through a multi-religious lens. In addition to looking at 20th-21st-century restructurings of East Asian traditions like Confucianism, Daoism, Buddhism, and Shintoism, we also focus on Christianity's impacts in the region as well as emerging, hybridized religious movements in the region. Topics include: religious communities' role in modernizing and nationalizing projects; religion and violent conflict; relationships between religious organizations and the state, under democratic, socialist, and capitalist orders; and East Asian religions' contemporary influences in globalized mass media and pop culture.

350 Missionaries and other Anthropologists

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

Missionaries have often been understood or depicted as proto-anthropologists, as early ethnographers, or as a foil against which the field of anthropology has defined itself. Some critics have situated missionaries as anthropology's repressed other. In this class we will explore the long encounter between Europe and the so-called New World through writings describing that encounter--writings by explorers, missionaries, naturalist-ethnologists, “Natives,” and, eventually, by professional anthropologists. We will consider material resemblances, collaborations and

antagonisms, and the ways in which anthropology is both heir to and a departure from missionary practice. Special attention will be given to the anthropological missionary work of Myron Eells, son of the founder of Whitman Seminary. The course will be interdisciplinary, drawing on scholarship and methods from Anthropology and Religious Studies and works on secularism. May be elected as Anthropology 350.

370 Religion and Disenchantment in 20th-century Literature

Not offered 2023-24

4 credits

How is religion imagined in modern literature? In what ways has literature itself become a species of religious thought? This course explores how 20th-century literature reflects a crisis of meaning in modern religious thought, on the one hand, and how it sustains the religious through attachment to form, to loss, and to belief without meaning, on the other. The course will examine the relationship between words and things, knowledge and power, truth and illusion, and consider the ways literary representation expresses, transposes, and otherwise complicates these terms. We will read writers with both direct and oblique relationships to religious discourses and institutions, writers who bring religious forms of thinking to crisis, who invert its logics, who explore its hauntings, its silences, its ambiguities, and its enduring capacity to make meaning. We will take up these conceptual questions in conversation with the historical (social, political) dynamics out of which they emerge and to which they are posed. Readings will be drawn from authors such as Kafka, Borges, Morrison, Djébar, Coetzee, Endo, O'Connor, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

387-390 Special Topics in Religious History, Literature, and Thought

2-4 credits

Intensive studies of particular authors, literatures, issues, or eras. The topics will vary year to year. Any current offerings follow.

387 ST: Beloved Bodies: Gender and the Erotic in Islamic Literature

Fall

Chubb-Confer

4 credits

Is sex an act of worship? Is the sexual body a vehicle for spiritual fulfillment, or an impediment to it? Can love and intimacy between human beings be a model for our relationship with the divine? In this course we will examine how the romantic allure of human bodies has been both celebrated and circumscribed in the literary and artistic traditions of Islam, with questions of gender and eroticism as the main sites of contestation. Primary sources including scripture, poetry, music, and visual art will be considered in conversation with theoretical work on feminism, masculinity, queerness, and embodiment in the academic study of religion. May be taken for credit toward the south Asia or humanistic inquiry requirement for the South Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Gender Studies major. Distribution area: cultural pluralism or humanities.

401, 402 Independent Study

Fall, Spring

Staff

1-4 credits

An opportunity for advanced students to pursue a specific interest after consultation with the instructor.

Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

448 Seminar in the Academic Study of Religion

Fall

Osborne

4 credits

A senior capstone experiences that prepares majors for senior thesis writing through an exploration of contemporary issues in the field. Required of, and open only to senior religion majors.

490 Thesis in Religion

Spring

Staff

4 credits

Research and writing of the senior thesis. Open only to and required of senior religion majors. *Prerequisite:* Religion 448.

498 Honors Thesis in Religion

Spring

Staff

4 credits

Research and writing of the senior honors thesis. Students register for Religion 490, not for Religion 498. The registration will be changed from Religion 490 to 498 for those students who attain honors in Religion. Open only to senior religion majors.