RELIGION (REL)

REL 101. Introduction to Religion. (3 h)
A study of meaning and value as expressed in religious thought, experience, and practice. Focus varies with instructor. (D)

REL 102. Introduction to the Bible. (3 h)
A study of the forms, settings, contents, and themes of the Old and New Testaments. Focus varies with instructor. (D)

REL 103A. Introduction to Christian Traditions. (3 h)
Study of Christian experience, thought, and practice. Focus varies with instructor. (D)

REL 103B. Introduction to Latin American Christian Traditions. (3 h)
Study of the origins, practices, experiences, and thought of Christian traditions in Latin America. Focus varies with instructor. (CD, D)

REL 104A. Introduction to Asian Religions. (3 h)
Study of the thought and practices within the major religious traditions of South, Southeast, and East Asia. Focus, region, and traditions may vary with instructor. (CD, D)

REL 104B. Introduction to South Asian Religions. (3 h)
Study of the thought and practices within the major religious traditions of South Asia (Indian subcontinent). Focus and traditions may vary with instructor (CD, D)

REL 104C. Introduction to East Asian Religions. (3 h)
Study of the thought and practices within the major religious traditions of East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan). Focus, regions, and traditions may vary with instructor. (CD, D)

REL 105. Monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. (3 h)
Examines the history, thought, and practices of these three monotheistic traditions in global perspective. Focus varies by instructor. (D)

REL 106. The Bible in America. (3 h)
Critical examination of the ways in which various individuals and groups have interpreted, appropriated and used the Bible in America. Focus varies with instructor. (D)

REL 107. Introduction to African Religions. (3 h)
A study of the basic features of African religious systems and institutions, with focus on the cultural, economic and political factors that have informed global preservations of an African worldview. (CD, D)

REL 108. Introduction to Hindu Traditions. (3 h)
An examination of historical, political, and cultural developments of various traditions placed under the heading 'Hinduism' in South Asia and abroad, with focus on ritual, myths, literature, and imagery that reflect their diverse beliefs and practices. (CD, D)

REL 109. Introduction to Buddhist Traditions. (3 h)
A study of the thought, history, and practices of Buddhist traditions in Asia. (CD, D)

REL 110. Introduction to Islamic Traditions. (3 h)
Examination of the origins and development of Islam. Attention is given to the formation of Islamic faith and practice. (CD, D)

REL 111. American Indian and First People's Traditions. (3 h)
Multi-disciplinary study of thought and practice in past and present American Indian and other indigenous communities. (CD, D)

REL 113. Introduction to Jewish Traditions. (3 h)
Examines the history, thought, and practices of Jewish traditions in global perspective. (D)

REL 200. Approaches to the Study of Religion. (3 h)
Explores the history of and methodological resources for the study of religion. Focus may vary with instructor, but the emphasis is on the ways religion has been defined, studied, and interpreted over the last several centuries.

REL 210. Jerusalem in History and Tradition. (3 h)
An examination of the ways meaning and religious significance have been imparted to Jerusalem far beyond its significance in world history.

REL 214. Excavating the Sacred. (3 h)
Explores what archaeology can (and can't) tell us about religious behaviors in the past as well as examine our ethical obligations surrounding the excavation, interpretation, and display of sacred material, including human remains. (D)

REL 230. Religion and the U.S. Constitution. (3 h)
Introduces the complex relationship between religion and the U.S. government through an in-depth analysis of the nation's founding documents and the subsequent series of First Amendment church-state decisions rendered by the United States Supreme Court.

REL 231. Against God: Atheism, Secular Humanism, & the Problem of Belief. (3 h)
Examines atheism, secular humanism, and the problems with conceiving of religion as fundamentally related to individual beliefs. (D)

REL 232. Trauma Tourism and Religion. (3 h)
Examines the intersection of religion and popular tourism to historical sites of trauma or death. (D, CD)

REL 233. Religious Ethics and Moral Problems. (3 h)
A comparative examination of religious approaches to ethics and contemporary moral problems. (D, CD)

REL 242. Sex, Death and Salvation. (3 h)
Examines how various religious traditions, past and present, have understood the overlapping notions of sexuality, human destiny, and the afterlife. (CD, D)

REL 244. Religion, Terrorism, and Violence. (3 h)
Investigates definitions of terrorism and examines religious motivations, justifications and legitimation of the use of violence in a number of belief systems. (CD, D)

REL 246. Religion and Race. (3 h)
Explores the relationship between religion and race, two categories that describe identity and that intersect in the lives of individuals and groups. Focus varies with instructor. (CD)

REL 261. Foundations of Traditional Judaism. (1.5 h)
A study of rabbinic and medieval Judaism, emphasizing the post-biblical codification of Jewish thought in the Mishnah, Talmud, and Midrash.

REL 263. The Religions of Japan. (3 h)
A study of the central religious traditions of Japan from pre-history to the present, including Shinto, Buddhism, Zen Buddhism, Christianity, and Confucianism. (CD, D)

REL 264. Jesus and Buddha. (3 h)
Examines the lives of Jesus and the Buddha and engages in comparative study of Christianity and Buddhism. (D, CD)

REL 265. Culture and Religion in Contemporary Native America. (3 h)
Interdisciplinary survey of American Indian culture, including the arts and literature, religions, and historical changes. Emphasizes the impact of the Conquista, encounters with Northern Atlantic societies, and contemporary developments. Also listed as AES 265. (CD)

REL 266. Religious Sects and Cults. (3 h)
Examines historical and contemporary issues in the study of new religious movements by analyzing media coverage of "cults" and investigating the history of specific groups.

REL 267. Religion and Popular Culture. (3 h)
Examination of the relationship between religion and popular culture, focusing on a variety of popular culture forms and interpretive skills. Focus varies with instructor.

REL 280. God, Gods, and the Ultimate. (3 h)
Comparative study of the way religious traditions—both Eastern and Western—conceptualize "Ultimate Reality" or "the Absolute" (e.g., God, Allah, Brahman, the Dao, Emptiness). Particular attention will be given to the historical evolution and the socio-religious implications of the various conceptualizations studied. (CD)

REL 282. Religion and Culture in China. (3 h)
A thematic study of Chinese religious culture focusing on history, ritual, scripture, and popular practice. Additional topics will include cosmology, ancestor veneration, shamanism, divination, and the role of women. (CD, D)

REL 286. Directed Reading. (1-3 h)
A project in an area of study not otherwise available in the department. May be repeated for credit. (Group I-III with department approval) P-Prerequisite override required.

REL 287. Directed Reading. (1-3 h)
A project in an area of study not otherwise available in the department. May be repeated for credit. (Group I-III with department approval) P-Prerequisite override required.

REL 288. Field Program in Religion and Public Engagement. (1-3 h)
Integrated study of major themes in religion and public engagement carried out in partnership with one or more communities off campus. May be repeated for credit. Focus varies with instructor. P-Prerequisite override required. On request.

REL 289. Mentored Research in Religion and Public Engagement. (3 h)
Individual mentored research in Religion and Public Engagement. May be repeated. Focus varies with instructor. P- Prerequisite override required.

REL 290. Special Topics in Religion. (1.5-3 h)
Religion topics of special interest. Group I-III with department approval. May be repeated for credit if topic varies.

REL 291. Crossing Divides: Dialogues Across Faith and Culture. (1.5-3 h)
Examines methods and practices of inter-religious dialogue with special attention to contemporary challenges. Focus varies with instructor. (CD)

REL 292. Crossing Divides: Crossing Back: Peacemaking. (1.5-3 h)
Examines methods and practices of inter-religious peacemaking with special attention to contemporary challenges. Focus varies with instructor. (CD)

REL 305. Ethnography of Religion. (3 h)
Study of theory and method in ethnography of religion where students closely read ethnographies from a variety of cultures and discuss the practical, methodological and ethical issues related to ethnography. Course culminates with students researching and writing their own ethnographies. (CD)

REL 306. Ritual Studies. (3 h)
Introduction to the various methods and theories employed in the field of ritual studies, while examining comparative rituals and ritualized practices from around the world. (CD)

REL 307. Magic, Science and Religion. (3 h)
Explores concepts of magic, science and religion that emerged in Western thought and culture from late antiquity through the European Enlightenment and analyzes connections between religious traditions and Western, Modern Science. (CD)

REL 308. Sacred Scripture in the Traditions of Abraham. (3 h)
A comparative study of sacred texts in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam with attention to the issues of authority, function and interpretation.

REL 310. The Prophetic Literature. (3 h)
An examination of the development and theological contents of the literary products of Israel's prophetic movement.

REL 312. The Critical Study of the Pentateuch. (3 h)
A study of the five traditional books of Moses (the Torah) and the various lines of analysis that modern Biblical critics have used to interpret their composition and role in the development of Israelite theological thought.

REL 313. Near Eastern Archeology. (3 h)
Survey of archaeological work in the Near East with attention to the ways in which interest in the Bible has shaped research questions, interpretation of materials, and museum exhibits. (EI)

REL 315. Field Research in Biblical Archeology. (3 h)
A study of the religion and culture of the ancient Near East through the excavation and interpretation of an ancient site.

REL 316. Field Research in Biblical Archeology. (3 h)
A study of the religion and culture of the ancient Near East through the excavation and interpretation of an ancient site.

REL 317. Wisdom Literature. (3 h)
An examination of the development, literary characteristics, and theological contents of the works of ancient Israel's sages.

REL 318. Feminist and Contemporary Interpretations of the Bible. (3 h)
A study of feminist and contemporary approaches to the Bible in light of the history of biblical interpretation and its methods, and a range of contemporary concerns and interpretive contexts. Focus varies with instructor.

REL 319. What Would Jesus Do? The New Testament and Christian Ethics. (3 h)
Study of the ethical foundations, principles, and teachings of the New Testament and their implications for contemporary social ethics.

REL 323. Jesus Traditions. (3 h)
Examines ancient Christian and other religious representations of Jesus in historical, social, cultural, and theological context.

REL 324. Early Christian Literature. (3 h)
An examination of various literatures and perspectives of the first three centuries of the Christian movement.

REL 328. Jewish-Christian Relations and the New Testament. (3 h)
Study of Jewish-Christian relations and selected writings of the New Testament in the historical, social, religious and political contexts of ancient Judaism and emerging Christianity. Focus varies with instructor.

REL 329. Asian Medicine, Health, and Healing Traditions. (3 h)
An interdisciplinary exploration of Indian, Chinese, and Tibetan medicines, as well as shamanic and other healing traditions in Asia, examining the intersection of health and bodily systems with religions and ethics. (CD)

REL 330. Pope, Jefferson and Imam: A Study in Comparative Ethics. (3 h)
A comparative study of the moral values and socio-ethical positions in the major religious traditions of the world, with particular focus on their various methods of reasoning and sources of authority.

REL 331. Religion and Law. (3 h)
A study of religion and law as distinct yet interdependent spheres that influence cultural negotiations about authority, power, identity and the regulation of society. Geographic and tradition-specific focus may vary with instructor.

REL 332. Religion and Public Engagement. (3 h)
Examines the interface between religious communities and the public sphere, and the potential for social change in contemporary global and local contexts through a range of readings, guest lectures, field trips, and films. Traditions and emphasis may vary with instructor.

REL 335. Religious Ethics and the Problem of War. (3 h)
An examination of the causes and characteristics of war, various religious responses to it, and approaches to peacemaking, with attention to selected contemporary issues.

REL 336. Religious Traditions and Human Rights. (3 h)
A study of relationships and tensions between religious traditions and human rights, with illustrations from historical and contemporary issues and movements.

REL 338. Religion, Ethics, and Politics. (3 h)
An examination of ethical issues in religion and politics using materials from a variety of sources and historical periods.

REL 339. Religion, Power, and Society in Modern Africa. (3 h)
An interdisciplinary study of the growth transformations of Africa's major religious traditions (Christianity, Islam, and the indigenous religions), and of their relations with secular social changes. (CD)

REL 340. Holy Chow! Food and Religion. (3 h)
Explores the roles food and eating play in religious behavior and the ways in which religious practices and experiences impact our eating habits and food choices. (CD)

REL 341. Religion and Ecology. (3 h)
Cross-cultural examination of the relationships among human beings, their diverse cultures, habitats, and religions, including social and political understandings of the environment. (CD)

REL 342. Religious Intolerance in the U.S.. (3 h)
Study of the various manifestations of religious intolerance in the United States from the colonial period until the present.

REL 343. Religion, Culture, and the Body. (3 h)
A cross-cultural, multi-disciplinary-exploration of the body as a malleable locus of contested ideals that informs personal, social, and religious identity formation. (CD)

REL 345. Religion and the Making of Black America. (3 h)
Exploration of the religious dimensions of African-American life from its African antecedents to contemporary figures and movements. (CD)

REL 346. Religious Utopias and the American Experience. (3 h)
Religious groups of many different origins have found in North America an open space for creating settlements that would embody their ideals. This course surveys a range of such 18th- and 19th-century utopian communities, including Moravians, Rappites, Shakers, and the Oneida and Amana colonies.

REL 347. Religion, Politics, and Sexuality in North America. (3 h)
Explores how "religion" regulates and normalizes gender and sexuality.

REL 348. Race, Memory, and Identity. (3 h)
Explores the collective memory and identity of American-Indian and African-American communities and their response to historical trauma in their cultural imagination, spirituality, and political and social activism. Also listed as AAS 378, HST 378. (CD)

REL 349. Asian Meditation Practices. (3 h)
Introduces and examines theoretical and practical aspects of various forms of Eastern meditation (concentration, mindfulness, Zen, visualization, and moving energy work) from both practitioner and modern scientific perspectives. (CD)

REL 350. Religion in Manga, Anime, and Popular Media. (3 h)
Investigates the relationship between religion and popular media in Japan, examining the depiction of diverse religious traditions (Shinto, Buddhism, Christianity, etc.) in manga (comic books), anime, and video games.

REL 351. Sociology of Religion. (3 h)
Introduction to the sociological analysis of religion, including religious beliefs and experiences, the cultural context of religion, varieties of religious organization, religious change and social change. Also listed as SOC 301.

REL 354. Meditation and Mindfulness Practices. (3 h)
Introduces and examines religious, theoretical, and practical aspects of various forms of meditation from both practitioner and modern scientific perspectives. (EI)

REL 355. Jewish Identities: Religion, Race, and Rights. (3 h)
Examines how evolving definitions of race, religion, and Jewishness have correlated and conflicted in varied and sometimes surprising ways and how these shifts have been tied to legal rights and social privileges. (CD)

REL 356. Faces of Modern Judaism. (3 h)
Examines contemporary expressions of Judaism and its historical roots. (CD)

REL 357. Jews in the United States. (3 h)
Examines Jewish American histories, experiences, and identities and their impact on American society as a whole.

REL 359. Hinduism in America. (3 h)
A study of the meanings, values, and practices associated with the religions of Hinduism in dialogue with the dominant culture of America. (CD)

REL 360. Hindus, Muslims, & Sikhs in North America. (3 h)
Examines the racialization of Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism in North America using a postcolonial and intersectional approach. (CD)

REL 361. Topics in Buddhism. (3 h)
Variable topics in Buddhist history, thought, and/or practice. May be repeated for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 362. Topics in Islam. (3 h)
Variable topics in Islamic history, thought, and/or practice. May be repeated for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 364. Topics in U.S. Religious History. (1.5-3 h)
Variable topics in U.S. religious history, thought, and/or practice. May be repeated for credit if topic varies.

REL 365. History of Religions in America. (3 h)
A study of American religions from colonial times until the present.

REL 367. Christian Mysticism. (3 h)
Study of Christian mysticism and contemplation (spirit possession, visions, dreams, and meditation) and their relation to contemporary issues.

REL 368. Protestant and Catholic Reformations. (3 h)
A study of the origin and development of Reformation theology and ecclesiology.

REL 369. Radical Christian Movements. (3 h)
A study of selected radical movements in the Christian tradition and their relation to contemporary issues.

REL 372. History of Christian Thought. (3 h)
A study of recurring patterns in Christian thought across time and cultures and some of the implications of those patterns in representative ancient and modern Christian figures.

REL 373. Special Topics in African-American Religious Traditions. (3 h)
Variable topics in African-American religious traditions. May be repeatable for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 374. Black Messiahs and Uncle Toms. (3 h)
Examines the cultural and religious history of black leadership in the United States. (CD)

REL 375. Race, Myth, and the American Imagination. (3 h)
A study of myth and mythology in relation to the racial imaginary in America. (CD)

REL 376. Race, Religion, and Film. (3 h)
Examines past and contemporary filmmakers who couple religious themes with racial concerns. (CD)

REL 378. Latin American Liberation Theologies. (3 h)
Historical, contextual, and theoretical survey of various forms of Latin American liberation theology, a school of Christian thought that both critiques systems of oppression and offers proposals for a more just and peaceful future.

REL 379. Muslim Youth. (3 h)
Explores the lived experiences of young Muslims around the world through the intersecting lenses of religion, power and protest. (CD)

REL 380. Islamic Bioethics. (3 h)
This course studies the various forms of religious, cultural, legal, and ethical reasoning in Islam that influence the processes of decision making about vital bioethical issues. (EI)

REL 381. Zen Buddhism. (3 h)
Examines the origins and development of Zen Buddhism from China (Ch'an) to Japan and contemporary America. Attention is given to Zen doctrine and practice in the context of the broader Buddhist tradition. (CD)

REL 383. The Quran and the Prophet. (3 h)
Examines the history, content, and main approaches to the sacred book of Islam. Explores the influence and interaction between the holy word and its transmitter the Prophet Muhammad. (CD, POR)

REL 384. Islam and Law: Varieties in Interpretation and Expression. (3 h)
Explores main tenets of the Islamic law (Shari'ah) and how this law has been applied in past and present Islamic societies. Looks at legal issues through the lens of gender, ethics, non-Muslim minorities, rights, and duties. (CD)

REL 385. Topics in South Asian Religions. (3 h)
Variable topics in the religions of South Asia. May be repeated for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 386. The Mahābhārata: Heroes, Demons, Women, and War. (3 h)
Examines the Indian epic, the Mahābhārata, while paying attention to its religious, social, and political contexts. (CD)

REL 387. Priests, Warriors and Ascetics in Ancient India. (3 h)
Introduces students to the history, culture, and ritual traditions of ancient India by examining the overlapping practices, beliefs, ideologies, and gendered representations of priests, warriors, kings, and ascetics. (CD)

REL 388. South Asian Women: Religion, Culture and Politics. (3 h)
Examines the intersection of religion, race and gender of South Asian women from a feminist and postcolonial perspective. (CD)

REL 389. Islam in the West: Changes and Challenges. (3 h)
Explores issues of identity, ethnicity and religion within various Muslim communities living in western countries. A central goal is to understand how these communities negotiate the new environment and the challenges they face.

REL 390. Special Topics in Religion. (1.5-3 h)
Religion topics of special interest. May be repeated for credit. Group I-III with department approval.

REL 391. Topics in East Asian Religions. (3 h)
Variable topics in the religions of China, Korea, and Japan. May be repeated for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 392. Topics in First Peoples' Traditions. (3 h)
Variable topics in the religions of American Indian and Canadian First Nations. May be repeated for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 393. Topics in Religions of Africa. (3 h)
Variable topics in the religions of Africa or African diaspora. May be repeated for credit if topic varies. (CD)

REL 395. Exploring Interfaith Practice and Leadership. (3 h)
This online course on interfaith leadership invites students to consider how they might engage most effectively with people from a variety of religious backgrounds. (EI)

REL 396. Interreligious Encounters & Engagements. (3 h)
Surveys the history of dialogue activities among various religious communities and introduces the methods and theories of interreligious dialogue. Part of this class is interaction with local interfaith projects.

REL 398. Honors in Religion. (3 h)
Directed study and research in preparation for writing and completing an honors thesis. P - Admission to the honors program in the Study of Religions.

REL 399. What's Next? Religious Studies Beyond WFU. (1.5 h)
This course explores how religious studies can be relevant to your life and career after you graduate from Wake Forest. Intended primarily for minors and majors in religious studies, the course is structured around writing and reflection on class readings, discussions, and portfolio development. Pass/Fail only.