

RELIGION, SOCIETY, AND CULTURE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Professor Anne Merideth
RELC 100; M/W 1400-1515



Religion has been and continues to be deeply embedded within human history, society, and culture in multiple and varied ways. People have long turned to religion to illuminate fundamental, “ultimate” questions about the meaning and purpose of human life while, at the same time, religion has also shaped and influenced how people live their everyday lives

in the mundane world. Students will explore the interconnections between religion and national identity, politics, gender, sexuality; the ways religion has been defined with respect to the sacred, belief, ritual, practice, and experience; and the major approaches to the academic study of religion and central debates within the field of the study of religion.

FROM CONFUCIUS TO ZEN

Professor Douglas Brooks
RELC 106; T/R 0940-1055



This course introduces the religious and intellectual traditions of classical China and Japan, with a particular emphasis on literary sources and the history of ideas. We begin with the origins of Chinese civilization and proceed chronologically to the development of Chinese Buddhism when we shift our focus to Japan and refocus on Buddhism and the native Shinto Japanese tradition, culmination in the

study of Zen.

INTRODUCTION TO THE QURAN

Professor John Thibdeau
RELC 108; M/W 1525-1640



We will employ a series of lenses through which we can explore and analyze the Qur’an from an academic perspective. Specific topics will include the historical composition of the Quran as a fixed text, traditions of interpretation (hermeneutics), theological and legal debates engendered by the text, poetic and literary aspects of the text, and major themes (e.g., women and gender, pluralism, and jihad). More

broadly, this course will explore questions of translation, interpretation, and scripture as they relate to the academic study of religion broadly and Islamic Studies in particular.

GENDER IN JUDAISM

Professor Jennifer Hall
RELC 147; M/W 1400-1515



In this course we will examine approaches to the body and gender as described and manifested in Jewish texts, rituals, and communal practice from the biblical period to the present. We will look at interpretations of the body, and its effect on the status of women in particular, in the Bible and Talmud, paying close attention to the historical and cultural contexts of these interpretations. There will be a strong focus on modern reevaluations of

gender and the body and how such reevaluations have transformed what it means to be “Jewish.” Topics include rites of passage, images of women in the Bible, feminist theology, as well as theories and depictions of the “Jewish body.”

BLACK PREACHING TRADITIONS

Professor Conä Marshall
RELC 165; M 1400-1640



Preaching uses religious rhetoric in communal contexts in order to share and perhaps persuade congregants into various Biblical interpretations. This course provides an overview of histories and contexts of Black preaching while exploring argument, arrangement, invention, delivery and style as preachers/pastors make claims of God, suffering and liberation. This course will be

interactive, consisting of presentations, discussions, lectures and a field trip to a local Black church to witness firsthand preaching traditions.

CRY FREEDOM: THEOLOGIES OF LIBERATION

Professor Jack Downey
RELC 234; M/W 1525-1640



Liberation theologies profess that the work of religion is both the salvation of souls and the eradication of systems of oppression. This course will examine trends in contemporary theology that have inspired struggles for sovereignty, reparations, and the environmental protection. Although the term “liberation theology” is rooted in 1960s

Christian radicalism, we will investigate historical and theoretical antecedents, as well contemporary developments that extend beyond Christianity and an initial focus on racial and economic justice.

MAJOR REQUIREMENTS

One of the following:

- REL 101: Introduction to the Old Testament
- REL 102: Introduction to the New Testament

One of the following:

- REL 103: History of Judaism
- REL 104: History of Christianity
- REL 105: Asian Search for Self
- REL 106: From Confucius to Zen
- REL 107: History of Islam

Theory Requirement (Junior Year):

- REL 293: Theories of Religion

Capstone Experience (Senior Year)

- REL 389: Senior Seminar
- REL 393: Senior Tutorial

Electives:

- 6 elective courses of your choice in consultation with your advisor

MINOR REQUIREMENTS

One of the following:

- REL 101: Introduction to the Old Testament
- REL 102: Introduction to the New Testament

One of the following:

- REL 103: History of Judaism
- REL 104: History of Christianity
- REL 105: Asian Search for Self
- REL 106: From Confucius to Zen
- REL 107: History of Islam

Theory Requirement:

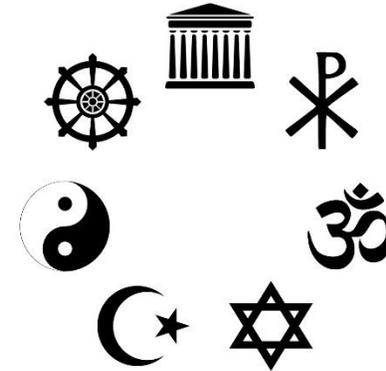
- REL 293: Theories of Religion

Electives:

- 3 elective courses of your choice in consultation with your advisor

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

ADVICE FOR FRESHMAN



The Rochester Curriculum is based on the idea that students learn best when they are allowed to study what excites and interests them. In the Department of Religion we couldn't agree more! Which is why we place such a high value on providing personalized guidance for each student who enters our classroom and office. We want students to take courses in areas that fascinate them, and, thus, there are no prerequisite courses that students need to take as they begin their journey to majoring in Religion.

We do encourage our Freshman to begin with a 100-level course, but there are many such classes covering a wide range of interests. Some students may want to begin with REL 100: Introduction to the Study of Religion which introduces students to the field of Religion and challenges students to think about the many ways to approach the study of religion and to reflect upon the ways in which religion intersects with many other aspects of culture and society.

Many students initially take courses in Religion in order to fulfill their cluster requirement in the humanities and then go on to declare a minor or major in Religion, as evidenced by the fact that majority of our students graduate with a double major! Freshman are encouraged to contact our Director of Undergraduate Studies, Professor Anne Merideth, with any questions. anne.merideth@rochester.edu