

RELIGION (REL)

REL 200. Religious Perspectives. 3 Credit Hours.

An introduction to religion as a dimension of human experience which affects all aspects of life. Students will be introduced to the basic concepts and methods necessary for the study of religion and will be exposed to the basic modes of religious experience and expression as found in the world's religions. Special emphasis will be placed on the Jewish and Christian religious traditions.

REL 308. Christian Beginnings. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will examine the historical, cultural, social, and theological roots of Christianity. It will cover the period from the beginning of "Second temple Judaism" in approximately 520 B.C.E. to the adoption of the Nicene Creed in 325 C.E. Christianity is often perceived as a religion founded by Jesus of Nazareth, or perhaps by the Apostle Paul, a missionary who spread the message about Jesus as Messiah and Savior across the Mediterranean world. This understanding, however, is historically inaccurate. Christianity began as a sectarian movement within Judaism and gradually emerged as separate religion combining elements of Jewish and Greco-Roman thought, a process that extended over three centuries.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 309. New Testament. 3 Credit Hours.

An introduction to the literature of the New Testament in the context of the history and religion of its times. After an overview of Hellenistic Judaism and the larger Greco-Roman world, the focus will be on the New Testament documents themselves: their history, literary structure and features, their theological stances, and the insight they may give into early Christian communities.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 310. The End Is Nigh! Understanding the Apocalyptic Worldview. 3 Credit Hours.

This course investigates the origins, development, and legacies of the apocalyptic and millennial worldviews. The course will explore the origins of these worldviews in the myths, stories, and traditions of the Ancient Near East; how these images and motifs are incorporated in the Biblical tradition(s); and how the worldview develops within various historical periods of hope and crisis. The course will also investigate apocalyptic literature, the elements of the genre, how these become lenses for evaluating the social and political reality of believers and non-believers alike. Students will explore the adaptation and appropriation of apocalypticism/millennialism by various social and religious movements as well as the "Americanization" and mainstreaming of this worldview. Lastly, students will have the chance to research and present on a variety of religious and political apocalyptic movements.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 314. Church and State in the U.S.. 3 Credit Hours.

An overview of church-state relations from colonial times to the present. It includes: judicial decisions on the establishment of religion and the freedom of religious practice; the power of religious groups in the political process; church-state relationships in other nations. A one-credit integrated service learning experience may be offered with this course. Fulfills Core requirement(s): Interdisciplinary Studies (IDS) OR Core Religion requirement, not both.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: PSC 314

REL 318. Religion and Science. 3 Credit Hours.

This course explores the intersection of religious thought and practice, on the one hand, and the natural sciences, on the other, as human attempts to understand and interpret both natural and human environments. The course will examine different models for conceiving the relationship between religion and the sciences as well as the meaning and function of specific concepts, theories, and paradigms in science and religion. Although the primary focus will be methodological, attention will also be devoted to particular questions of ethics and public policy that pertain to science and religion.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 319. Varieties of Latino/a Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

Varieties of Latino/a Religions is an introduction to New World religions in Mexico, the Caribbean, and the United States. This course will analyze the emergence of new traditions in and through the contact, collision, and exchange of Spanish Catholic, African, and American indigenous cultures. It will also explore their further transformations in the context of the modern, Anglo-Protestant culture of the United States. Theoretical issues to be explored will include religion and political in/subordination, religion and "hyphenated identity", and religion and capitalism. Fulfills Core diversity requirement.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 320. Women and Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

In view of the rapidly changing self-concepts and roles of women, both in the churches and in society as well as the discussion about the nature of our images of God and our use of God-language, this course explores some of the implications of these changes for modern women and men. Historical, archetypal and contemporary material is used in a seminar format.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: GWS 320

REL 323. Native American Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

A study of selected Native American traditions from historical and comparative perspectives. Particular attention will be given to the Iroquois and will include discussion of Iroquois-Christian interaction. Fulfills Core Requirements: Diversity (DIV) and Cultural Elective (CE). Prerequisite: Junior Standing required.

REL 325. Religion and Ecology. 3 Credit Hours.

Religion and Ecology explores the ways that religious traditions understand and interact with their environments. The course asks how religious communities think about "nature" and "life" and how they define a human relationship to, and responsibility for, the earth. Students will develop skills in identifying the religious underpinnings of contemporary attitudes and practices regarding the environment.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing required.

REL 326. Religion and Popular Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

Popular culture can be studied from a variety of approaches. This course "reads" movies, TV, Internet sources (blogs, memes, YouTube, etc.) and other material in conversation with the study of religion. While in some cases this will mean the examination of how religion is portrayed in the source material, it will also involve asking how the sources function as religion in the United States today, and how ideas that we usually think of as "religious" might be found in popular sources.

Prerequisites: Junior Standing.

REL 327. Religion, Drugs, and Culture. 3 Credit Hours.

What's the different between a drug and medicine? Is there a relationship between legality and morality? Throughout human history, various types of natural and synthetic mind-altering substances have occupied central roles in a variety of cultures, religious rituals, and laws. Religion 327 explores the spiritual potentials as well as dark recesses that some of these substances have come to assume in specific cultural contexts. The first half of the course will interrogate differences between "hallucinogens" and "entheogens" by focusing on the sacramental importance of peyote, ayahuasca, and psychedelic mushrooms in particular indigenous rituals- as well as the modern western appropriation of these plants and/or their active psychotropic chemicals for the purpose of psychological exploration and medical experimentation. The second half of the course will focus primarily on alcohol, especially from the lenses of Islam, Christianity, and the contemporary American context, by exploring alcohol as a legally circumscribed and/or sacramentally sanctioned substance. Part of this exploration will involve the religious dimensions of addiction and recovery in both Native American and modern western settings, such as Alcoholics Anonymous. Through a critical analysis of "drugs" in their cultural contexts, Religion 327 will illuminate the central importance of mind-altering substances in religious thought and practice while at once questioning the boundaries between drugs and medicine, religion and culture. Your ability to benefit from this class will neither be hindered nor aided by your religious affiliations or lack thereof. The same goes for your personal experience with substances we learn about in the course. What will benefit you is your ability to seriously entertain a multiplicity of worldviews-some of which may strike you as illogical, grotesque, and strange, and others beautiful, compelling, and natural.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing required.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Diversity (DIV).

REL 330. Medicine and Ethics: Theological Perspec. 3 Credit Hours.

The course proposes to explore the interaction between religious experience and biomedical practice. The course has two basic goals: first, to systematically reflect on the experience of illness/suffering and well-being/health as theological and cultural categories and realities; and secondly, to develop a distinctively Christian contribution to medical ethics.

REL 336. Comparative Religious Ethics & Social Concerns. 3 Credit Hours.

The course is a study in comparative religious ethics. The course will guide students through the ethical perspectives that eastern, western, and indigenous religious traditions have developed on four social issues facing our world: the construction of sexuality and gender, social justice, violence and the environment.

Prerequisite: Junior Standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: GLA 336, PGS 336

REL 345. What Does Prayer Do?. 3 Credit Hours.

The monk, the poet, the neuroscientist, the constitutional lawyer—all hear the question what does prayer do from their own perspectives. Students will approach this enduring question from multiple disciplinary perspectives, including theology, philosophy, religious studies, medicine, the social sciences, law, and the arts. Readings will be chosen from major wisdom traditions, with some emphasis on Christian examples. Junior standing required.

Prerequisites: PHL 100-level and PHL 200-level.

REL 346. Religion and Life Stories. 3 Credit Hours.

One way in which humans carry out their quest for meaning in life is by attending to the lives of others. Such a quest involves the religious dimensions (broadly understood) of human existence. This course investigates such a quest for meaning in the life stories of significant individuals in history.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 349. Religion in Contemporary Film. 3 Credit Hours.

This core course is a writing-intensive critical analysis of contemporary European and American films from the perspective of concerns and questions associated with a critical study of religion: freedom, violence, gender and sexuality, grace, eros, reconciliation, sacrifice, the other, redemption. Visual texts or films for the course include, but are not limited to, Amadeus, Kundun, Little Buddah, Smoke Signals, Unforgiven, Aliens, Babette's Feast and Breaking the Waves. Course readings are (1) primary religious texts from indigenous traditions, Asian religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and (2) film criticism incorporating feminist, literary, biblical, and theological methodologies. Class style: short lectures, guided discussion (led by students and instructor), screening of films. There are weekly papers or electronic postings, a course project and short presentation on that project. Fulfills REL 300 core requirement. Fulfills core Visual and Performing Arts requirement (VPA).

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 350. World Religions and Film. 3 Credit Hours.

This course satisfies the REL 300 core requirement. It offers a comparative study of major world religious traditions as manifested in both religious writings and a variety of international film texts. Through lectures, discussions, assigned readings, and weekly screenings of films rooted in specific religious traditions, students will gain a broad, basic knowledge of contemporary Eastern and Western religions. Students will consider Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with emphasis varying each semester. The course pays attention to the tenets, ritual and worship, ethics and historical background of each tradition through as seen in both classic and contemporary films. The course is valuable to students unfamiliar with major world religious traditions or the cinema's profound ability to inform, motive and inspire. Requirements: weekly readings, short papers, film screenings, lectures, discussion and final exam. Fulfills Core requirement(s): Visual and Performing Arts (VPA).

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: REL 386

REL 360. The Qur'an. 3 Credit Hours.

Followers of Islam, called Muslims, number at well over a billion and span the globe from California to Cairo to Kuala Lumpur. Their languages, practices and geographical centers are diverse, complex, and require more than a lifetime to understand fully. This course will nonetheless guide students through a modest survey of that diversity and complexity, with particular attention to the Islamic holy book, the Qur'an. We will explore multiple dimensions of Islam and the Qur'an, including political, ethical, and mystical dimensions-with attention to demographic diversity. This course, moreover, will give attention not only to the Qur'an per se, but also how to metacognitively study the Qur'an, including attention to popular media and power dynamics in the dissemination of knowledge. Your ability to benefit from this class will neither be hindered nor aided by your religious affiliations or lack thereof. What will benefit you is your ability to seriously entertain a multiplicity of worldviews-some of which may strike you as illogical, grotesque, and strange, and others beautiful, compelling, and natural. Fulfill(s) Core Requirements: Diversity (DIV) and Cultural Elective (CE).

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 361. Islam, Sex, and Gender. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will explore themes of sex and gender within Islamic traditions, including queerness, feminism, masculinity, and eroticism, with attention to demographic diversity and questions of social justice. Students will read primary and secondary sources by scholars from around the world as well as evaluate film, literature, and art produced by and about Muslims. Students will also give attention to roles of sex and gender in a comparative context, by examining cultural assumptions about popular American attitudes and in conversation with material relevant specifically to Islam and Muslims. Fulfills Core Requirements: Diversity (DIV) and Cultural Elective (CE).

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 362. Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

The general purpose of this course is to provide a historical survey of Jewish religious thought from its biblical origins through the post-biblical era to the present. An overview of the major ideas that influenced Jewish history is followed by an analysis of the outstanding theological concepts. Consideration is given to the life cycle that affects Jewish personal existence. This course also indicates the ethical and moral precepts that characterize Judaism throughout the ages. Course sponsored by the Jewish Chautauqua Society.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 363. Religions of Asia. 3 Credit Hours.

The practices, beliefs and history of Hinduism, Buddhism (including Japanese developments) and Taoism will be examined in this course. Particular attention will be given to the relationship of each tradition to its cultural context in the course of history and to problems confronting each tradition in the modern world.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Diversity (DIV).

Cross-listed Courses: GLA 365, PGS 365

REL 364. Religion in America. 3 Credit Hours.

From a religious point of view, major historians have described America variously as a righteous empire, a lively experiment in pluralism and a nation with the soul of a church. As these descriptions, taken together hint, American religious history is colored by the existence of three distinct and often conflicting forces: evangelical piety, a political pluralism and a distinctive form of civil religion. This course will attempt to trace and to celebrate the enduring vitality of each of these forces throughout the history of the republic and to make the student aware of the tensions which have arisen and which continue to arise as a result of the divided pedigree of American religion. Topics to be covered will include the New England way, immigration and nativism, Manifest Destiny and the rise of indigenous American religious communities.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 365. Islam. 3 Credit Hours.

Followers of Islam, called Muslims, number at well over a billion and span the globe from California to Cairo to Kuala Lumpur. Because their languages, practices and geographical centers are diverse and complex we will approach a variety of texts (e.g., the Qur'an, prophetic reports, and prayer manuals), people (e.g., Muhammad, Rabi'a of Basra, and Malcolm X), and concepts (e.g., faith, afterlife, and violence), from multiple angles—a process that should prove both challenging and rewarding. The course will take a roughly chronological approach, beginning with the genesis of Islam in the 7th-century Arabian peninsula, but we will also examine themes such as gender, mysticism, and language. Given our 21st-century America context, moreover, we will also consider the implications of our subject on the modern world and America in particular throughout the entire semester. Therefore, this course will not only give attention to "Islam" per se, but also how to metacognitively study Islam. The course will press you to seriously entertain a multiplicity of worldviews—some of which may strike you as illogical, grotesque, and strange, and others beautiful, compelling, and natural.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 366. Islamic Mysticism. 3 Credit Hours.

Followers of Islam, called Muslims, number at well over a billion and span the globe from California to Cairo to Kuala Lumpur. Their languages, practices and geographical centers are diverse, complex, and require more than a lifetime to understand fully. This course will nonetheless guide students through a modest survey of that diversity and complexity, with particular attention to "Islamic mysticism" per se, but also how to metacognitively study the topic, including attention to popular media and power dynamics in the dissemination of knowledge. Your ability to benefit from this class will neither be hindered nor aided by your religious affiliations or lack thereof. What will benefit you is your ability to seriously entertain a multiplicity of worldviews-some of which may strike you as illogical, grotesque, and strange, and others beautiful, compelling, and natural.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Cultural Elective (CE) and Diversity (DIV).

REL 367. African Traditional Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

The purpose of the course is to introduce students to African Traditional Religions (ATR) practiced among many African societies in sub-Saharan Africa. Like other courses in the study of religion, this course will illustrate the ways in which religion is a dimension of human experience by exploring what ATR is and why and how it answers significant human questions of meaning in the context of the African moral universe. Aside from acquainting students with some of the major themes and practices of ATR, the course will demonstrate how these play a role in the contemporary encounter between Christianity and African culture in the modern world.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 369. Sociology of Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

The relationship between religion and society is complex, dynamic, and ever-changing. It has been at the root of sociology itself since the discipline began and was central to the work of many of its founders. In this course, you will use a sociological perspective to examine this relationship between religion and society. Much of the class will deal with American forms of religion, but we will also consider examples of religion outside of the U.S. context. Fulfills Core diversity requirement.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: SOC 369

REL 370. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is a systematic introduction to the philosophy of religion. Topics covered may include the following: arguments for (and against) the existence of God, the rationality of religious belief and the nature of belief in general, the divine attributes, the status of religious claims, and the opportunities and challenges of religious pluralism. This course may also examine the claims of particular theistic traditions using the methodology of philosophical theology. This course will draw upon both classical and contemporary texts from a variety of philosophical perspectives. Prerequisite(s): PHL-110 or HON-110 and PHL-210 or HON-215. Junior standing required.

Fulfills: Ways of Knowing/Metaphysics for Philosophy majors.

Cross-listed Courses: PHL 370

REL 371. History and Spirituality of the Jesuits. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will acquaint students with the history and the distinctive, world-engaging spirituality of the Society of Jesus. In addition to presenting a chronological overview of Jesuit history, it will also examine the central themes of the Spiritual Exercises and the missionary strategies and philosophy of education of the Jesuits.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: HST 343

REL 382. Buddhism & Catholicism. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will enter into the contemporary dialogue between Catholicism and Buddhism, exploring both the fundamental differences and the possible affinities between them. In addition to becoming acquainted with another major world religion, students will be presented with fresh perspectives for approaching Catholicism's own rich heritage of mysticism, monasticism and social service. Students will pursue comparative study of such topics as the relation between religious language and experience, concepts of the self and ultimate reality, the causes of and remedies for human suffering and the meaning of spirituality as an engagement with the world, not a flight from it.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 383. Philosophies of Judaism. 3 Credit Hours.

An examination of a variety of Jewish philosophical tendencies as responses to fundamental crises and challenges. The course will focus on several paradigmatic philosophies of Judaism in terms of the following: (a) the human person (philosophical anthropology); (b) revelation and obligation; (c) theology; and (d) Jewish identity and existence. The influence and importance of gender and culture in the development of these philosophies will also be stressed.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: PHL 324

REL 386. World Religions and Film. 4 Credit Hours.

Special Topics: This course satisfies the REL 300 core requirement. It offers a comparative study of major religious traditions of the world as manifested in both religious writings and a variety of international film texts. Through lectures, discussions, assigned readings, and weekly screenings of films rooted in specific religious traditions, students will gain a broad, basic knowledge of contemporary Eastern and Western religions. We will consider Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with attention paid to the tenets, ritual and worship, ethics and historical background of each as seen in a representative selection of classic and contemporary films. This course will be of value to students unfamiliar with the major religious traditions of the world or with the cinema's profound ability to inform, to motivate, and to inspire. Weekly readings and short papers, lectures, screenings; final exam.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Cross-listed Courses: REL 350

REL 390. Independent Study. 1-3 Credit Hours.

A student who wishes to pursue independent study for academic credit must submit, prior to registration, a proposed plan of study that includes the topic to be studied, the goal to be achieved, the methodology to be followed, the schedule of supervision, the end product, the evaluation procedure and the number of credits sought. All proposals must be approved by the supervising faculty member, the department chair and the academic dean. They will be kept on file in the academic dean's office.

Prerequisite: REL 200.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 391. Independent Study. 3 Credit Hours.

A student who wishes to pursue independent study for academic credit must submit, prior to registration, a proposed plan of study that includes the topic to be studied, the goal to be achieved, the methodology to be followed, the schedule of supervision, the end product, the evaluation procedure and the number of credits sought. All proposals must be approved by the supervising faculty member, the department chair and the academic dean. They will be kept on file in the academic dean's office.

Prerequisite: REL 200.

REL 392. Independent Study. 1-3 Credit Hours.

A student who wishes to pursue independent study for academic credit must submit, prior to registration, a proposed plan of study that includes the topic to be studied, the goal to be achieved, the methodology to be followed, the schedule of supervision, the end product, the evaluation procedure and the number of credits sought. All proposals must be approved by the supervising faculty member, the department chair and the academic dean. They will be kept on file in the academic dean's office.

Prerequisite: REL 200.

REL 395. Special Topics. 3 Credit Hours.

The department of religious studies recognizes that students often have interests that are not covered in the scheduled course offerings.

REL 395-399 provides a structure by which a group of students may petition the department to offer a course in a subject matter of particular interest to the students. The following conditions must be met in order for such a course to be offered: (1) A group of at least 10 students must agree on an area of inquiry and submit formal petition to the chair of the department; (2) the petition normally must be filed with the chair by Oct. 15 for a spring semester course and by March 1 for a fall semester course; (3) necessary resources among faculty and library must be available; and (4) the petition must be reviewed and approved by the curriculum committee of the department of religious studies.

Prerequisite: REL 200.

REL 398. Religious Studies Colloquium. 1 Credit Hour.

The colloquium will meet bi-weekly for two hours to examine significant topics and developments pertinent to the history, expression, and study of religion. Faculty and students will decide upon a unifying theme for the course each semester, but course topics will depend on the interests of the student (or occasionally faculty person) presenting for the day. Colloquium will take advantage of public lectures, both at Le Moyne and in the region. Students will actively assess their progress toward meeting Religious Studies learning objectives. Eligible students may develop ideas for departmental Honors projects and, as they progress on their projects, present their research to their peers.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 399. Religious Studies Colloquium. 1 Credit Hour.

The colloquium will meet bi-weekly for two hours to examine significant topics and developments pertinent to the history, expression, and study of religion. Faculty and students will decide upon a unifying theme for the course each semester, but course topics will depend on the interests of the student (or occasionally faculty person) presenting for the day. Colloquium will take advantage of public lectures, both at Le Moyne and in the region. Students will actively assess their progress toward meeting Religious Studies learning objectives. Eligible students may develop ideas for departmental Honors projects and, as they progress on their projects, present their research to their peers. Sophomore/Junior/ Senior standing.

REL 400. Religion, Conflict, Peace/African Context. 3 Credit Hours.

This course is designed to introduce the class to basic questions, patterns, and contemporary issues on religion, justice, and peace in an African context. As such, the course will not be centered on the presentation of a particular narrative, thematic or structural account of the history of the multiple conflict situations in Africa. On the contrary, it is the aim of this course to take a case-study approach to the problems affecting Africa. In the light of the perspectives on Peace and Global Studies Program at Le Moyne College, we shall focus on ethnicity, religion and justice in conflict situation in African context. While this course aims to introduce student to the socio-economic, political and religious problems affecting the continent go back to the colonial period.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): DIV.

Cross-listed Courses: PGS 408, GLA 408

REL 401. Corporate Responsibility. 3 Credit Hours.

Corporations (public and private) play important roles in the lives and livelihoods of individuals; in fact, they seem to envelop, if not replace, persons as the loci of power and responsibility. Corporate Responsibility is an integrative and interdisciplinary senior capstone course which deals with the critical social and moral questions that such an economic life raises. Through a combination of case studies, lectures, and student group projects, the course will underscore the importance of the religious ethical traditions, especially the Christian, in the struggle to understand whether "economic decisions have human consequences and moral content." Open to students from all major disciplines.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 404. Before Heaven & Hell. 3 Credit Hours.

This seminar asks two interrelated questions. First, how might understandings of death inform the way we live? Second, what do various conceptions of an afterlife - for example, notions of judgement, the immortality of the soul, and resurrection of the body - suggest about what it means to be human? Early Christian sources from the New Testament to Augustine are considered in the context of readings from earlier and surrounding cultures, including the Hebrew Bible and Greco-Roman literature.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 405. Ethics: Perspective of Oppressed. 3 Credit Hours.

This senior seminar will study ethics from the perspective of social groups in American society whose voices have too often been muted because of oppression and marginalization. Those groups include the poor, women, people of color (African American, Native American and Latino) and gays/lesbians. The focus will be to allow these groups to voice the nature of their oppression (its causes and extent), to challenge the inadequacies of traditional morality and to identify the moral resources to promote social change.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Diversity (DIV).

REL 407. Postcolonial Theol & Cinemas of 3rd Wrld. 3 Credit Hours.

This seminar will explore both the emerging discipline of postcolonial theology and the growing importance of Third World cinema. Considering the challenges posed by contemporary Third World theologians, both female and male, this course will explore the many ways in which their concerns have been manifested in an international variety of works by male and female filmmakers. As we analyze emerging themes and issues in African, Latin American, and Asian culture today, the course will promote global awareness in doing theology and explore possibilities for dialogue and solidarity among people in different contexts. It will also show how Christianity's historical relationship with empire has shaped recent and contemporary understandings of non-western traditions and interpretative frameworks.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 409. Cults and Cultural Conflicts. 3 Credit Hours.

A common feature of the experience of religious "cults", which have emerged in all major religious traditions, is some degree of conflict with the surrounding culture. This course will explore the dynamics of cultural conflict experienced by "cults". We will explore the following questions: What do we mean by the terms, "cult", new religious movement, alternative religion, and minority religion? Why does conflict between "cults" and the surrounding culture occur? What forms does it take? What factors exacerbate or mitigate conflict? What strategies have various "cults" employed to deal with conflict? Which strategies have been most successful? Why? What strategies have various cultures employed to deal with conflict with "cults"? Which strategies have been most successful? Why?

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 411. Public Religion and the Social Order. 3 Credit Hours.

This seminar will study the religious dimensions of secular, social behavior by uncovering the experiences of ultimacy or sacrality in political, economic and social institutions, myths and behavior. Students will investigate a variety of ways that religious persons and groups have used historically both to interpret and to interact with the social order. In addition, the effect of changes in the political and social order upon religious communities and traditions will also be examined. Primary attention will be devoted to religion and the social order in the United States of America.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 412. Religion, Sex and Gender. 3 Credit Hours.

This seminar will study the religious understandings of sex and sexuality, and the role which religion plays in establishing and reinforcing gender roles. Students will explore the attitudes toward sex and sexuality found in religious art, music and literature. The course will treat the dualisms which prevail in all cultures and academic disciplines that assign different tasks and qualities to men and women. Students will also discuss the gender expectations of different religious traditions to assess the impact that such expectations have on the pursuit of knowledge.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

Fulfills Core Requirement(s): Diversity (DIV).

Cross-listed Courses: GWS 416

REL 413. Religion and the Imagination. 3 Credit Hours.

In this seminar, students will be asked to examine patterns of symbols in literature, in the visual and performing arts, including religious myths, texts and rituals. The purpose of this study will be to appreciate the role of the imagination in the creation and interpretation of various cultural expressions. The seminar will also discuss the limitations which post-Enlightenment efforts at demystification impose on understanding the human condition. Senior core seminar. Fulfills core Visual and Performing Arts requirement. (VPA)

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 414. Post-Modern Christian Theology. 3 Credit Hours.

In this seminar, students will be asked to explore the mutual influence of theology and culture. Post-modernity critiques the Enlightenment mentality, but there are several strands of such criticism, some congenial to theology, others that are not. Within this context, attention will be paid to postmodern expressions of culture in art, literature and philosophy; the questions raised for and by theology; and the responses of various theologies to these questions. Senior core seminar.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 416. Religion and the Media. 3 Credit Hours.

This course focuses on the relationship between mass media and religion in U.S. and other cultures. It introduces students to media studies and some of the methods used to study the intersections of religion and mass media, and analyzes how print and electronic news media, as well as television and film, have depicted (represented) specific religious groups and religion in general, as well as how such media represents gender, class, race, and ethnicity in a religious context of religion. The course also considers the ways in which religion and media interact and influence each other.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 421. The Occult in American Religions. 3 Credit Hours.

From the eighteenth century until today, a succession of metaphysical/occult religions has emerged in the United States emphasizing the marvelous and weird dimensions of the modern world. Religious Studies 421 analyzes the cultural appeal and function of wonder, terror, and desire in a number of these movements, including Freemasonry, early Mormonism, Spiritualism, Ufology, New Age spirituality, and Scientology.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 425. The Faith That Does Justice. 3 Credit Hours.

This course will engage each student in a social justice action project, while studying how faith commitments, particularly those embedded in Christian thought and culture, and principles of social justice can be implemented in that project. The course will require a synthesis of assigned reading on social justice, their own faith traditions, and Catholic social teaching, as well as the practical experience gained in the project. The course will act as the capstone course for the Faith and Social Justice minor.

Prerequisite: Junior standing required.

REL 450. Capstone in Religious Studies. 3 Credit Hours.

The purpose of this course is to provide an advanced level seminar/capstone experience for religious studies, majors, minors and others interested in the study of religion in which students are able to both examine the influences and ideas that are currently shaping the field of religious studies and to facilitate student reflection on their course of study in the major/minor/courses and its implications for their future.

Prerequisites: REL 200 and a REL 300 level course, or permission of the department chair of REL.

REL 490. Research. 1-3 Credit Hours.

An upper-class student who wishes to undertake a research project for academic credit during a given semester must submit a research proposal prior to registration and a research report at the end of the semester. The proposal should specify the number of credits sought. All proposals must be approved by the research director, the department chair and the academic dean. They will be kept on file in the academic dean's office. May be used to fulfill the second religious studies course required by the core curriculum.

Prerequisite: REL 200.