

## Religious Studies Courses

### **RST 100 Quest for Religious Meaning** (3 credits)

The field of religion explores the ultimate questions of human being, meaning, and value. How did the world come to be as it is? Why is there pain and suffering? Is there a plan for individual life, for human history, for the world? Is the cosmos in which we live fundamentally hostile, neutral, or caring and supportive of our being? This course examines a variety of methods used for responding to such questions within the academic study of religion. It inquires into major themes of various religions and addresses critical issues in religion and ethics with regard to their impact upon our lives today. Recommended as a first course in religious studies.

### **RST 105 Ethical Topics** (3 credits)

Depending upon the needs and interests of students, this course will explore a range of issues with ethical implications for persons of faith, including such topics as sexual ethics, “matters of life and death” (abortion, eugenics, euthanasia), and ecotheology.

### **RST 120 The Bible Today** (3 credits)

This course is an introduction to the Bible as a whole and to biblical studies as an academic discipline. The cultural background, major events, sources, literary genres, persons, themes, and beliefs of both Old Testament and New Testament will be explored through the study of representative biblical texts and the use of secondary sources. The widely accepted methods of current historical biblical scholarship will be employed.

### **RST 203 Sex, Gender and Religion** (3 credits)

This course considers how religions have shaped ideas about sex, sexuality and gender roles.

### **RST 204 Martin Luther King, Jr.: His Mission and Message** (1.5 credits)

This course surveys Martin Luther King, Jr.’s activity in the civil rights movement and the theology, political theory, and social vision that supported that activity. Students will read key texts written by MLK himself as well as secondary material.

### **RST 205 Religion in Stories, Plays and Films** (3 credits)

An exploration of religious questions and affirmations as these are encountered in selected novels, short stories, plays, and films.

### **RST 210 Introduction to Practical Theology** (3 credits)

This course serves as an introduction to some of the key elements of ministry in the Christian parish. These subjects include human and faith development, family systems theory, group theory, and theology of ministry.

### **RST 212 Introduction to Christian Education** (2 credits)

A blend of class work and field experience, this course serves as a general introduction in which each student will develop his/her own philosophy of Christian Education, informed by major thinkers and trends in the discipline. Sufficient hours will be scheduled to meet the credit hour requirements for a 2 credit course.

### **RST 240 Christian Origins** (3 credits)

This course traces early Christian origins from Jesus through the establishment of the early church. It offers an introduction to early Christian literature and Christian theology. Key Christian doctrines such as salvation, incarnation, trinity, etc. will be explored.

### **RST 242 Spiritual Journey** (3 credits)

This course surveys the history of Christian spirituality. Students are encouraged to explore ways in which the experiences of men and women in history have shaped their convictions and how, in turn, their religious convictions informed their interpretation of their experience. There is also opportunity to consider the implications that this interaction of faith and experience may hold today.

### **RST 270 Religion in the Middle East** (3 credits)

An introduction to the role religion (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) has played, from ancient times to the present, in the troubled history of the Middle East. Focus upon contemporary Israel, the Palestinians, Christians within Israel, and Israel’s Arab/Muslim neighbors.

**RST 272 Religions of India and South Asia** (3 credits each)

An introduction to the origins, historical developments, basic beliefs and practices of Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism (India) and Theravada Buddhism (Shri Lanka).

**RST 275 Religions of China** (3 credits each)

An introduction to the origins, historical developments, basic beliefs and practices of Taoism, Confucianism, and Mahayana Buddhism in China.

**RST 301 Religion and Women's Studies** (3 credits)

This course explores the interaction between the fields of religious studies and women's studies. The course explores several methodological approaches to this area of study, but Christian feminist theology is emphasized.

**RST 303 African Americans, Religion and Social Change** (3 credits)

This course explores the connections between theology and African American liberation movements from the 1950s to the present. The course focuses on religious beliefs and ethical commitments that have inspired and shaped African Americans' work for social change.

**RST 306 Religion in the Southern Ethos** (3 credits)

This course traces historically the substantive role that religion has played in the creation of what is identified in several disciplines as the "Southern Ethos."

**RST 307 Religion and Psychology: Freud, Transactional Analysis, and Jung**

(3 credits each)

An in-depth exploration of the relation between religion and psychology as reflected in selected works of Sigmund Freud, Transactional Analysts, and Carl Jung in dialogue with representative 20th century, mostly mainstream Protestant, theologians (e.g. Richard Niebuhr and Paul Tillich). This course is open to students at the sophomore level with consultation and approval of the professor.

**RST 308 Religion and Psychology: Humanist, Behaviorist, and Developmental Schools** (3 credits each)

An in-depth exploration of the relation between religion and psychology as reflected in selected works of Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, and B.F. Skinner in dialogue with representative 20th century, mostly mainstream Protestant, theologians. This course is open to students at the sophomore level with consultation and approval of the professor.

**RST 311 Christianity and Social Action** (3 credits)

This course is a service-learning course that places students as volunteers in social action agencies/ministries and provides theoretical, interpretive frameworks for such work.

**RST 315 Topics in Practical Theology** (1.5 credits)

Responsive to the interests of students and departmental faculty, this course will focus upon topics relating to concrete human experience, such as Theology of the Body; Theology of Emotions; Spiritual Formation; and Pastoral Care.

**RST 316 Ministry with Children** (2 credits)

This course focuses on the specific challenges and opportunities in educational programming for children in a Christian context. Field experience will supplement classroom study and discussion. Prerequisite: Introduction to Christian Education or Introduction to Practical Theology or permission of instructor. Sufficient hours will be scheduled to meet the credit hour requirements for a 2 credit course.

**RST 317 Ministry with Youth** (2 credits)

This course focuses on the distinctive challenges and opportunities in programming for youth in a context of shared ministry. Field experience will supplement classroom work. Prerequisite: Introduction to Christian Education or Introduction to Practical Theology or permission of instructor. Sufficient hours will be scheduled to meet the credit hour requirements for a 2 credit course.

**RST 320 The Pentateuch** (3 credits)

A contemporary scholarly exploration of the first five books of the Hebrew Bible using the widely accepted methods of undergraduate academic biblical study: historical recollection, literary analysis, and theological interpretation.

**RST 322 Hebrew Prophets** (3 credits)

Historical, literary, and theological study of the classical (8th-9th centuries BCE) prophets of ancient Israel, preserved in the Tanak (the Hebrew Bible).

**RST 324 Hebrew Psalms and Wisdom Literature** (3 credits)

Historical, literary, and theological study of the psalms and wisdom literature of ancient Israel in the Tanak (Hebrew Bible) and the continuing Christian community.

**RST 330 The Synoptic Gospels** (3 credits)

The origins, sources (both oral and literary), formations and literary relations of the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Reflections on theological themes in these early Christian documents. Includes a brief introduction to the question of the historical Jesus and to selected non-canonical early Christian “gospels.”

**RST 332 The Life and Letters of the Apostle Paul** (3 credits)

Historical, literary, and theological study of the writings of Paul in the New Testament canon.

**RST 334 Johannine Literature** (3 credits)

Historical, literary, and theological study of the New Testament documents of the Gospel According to John, the letters of I John, II John, and III John, and the Apocalypse of John (or book of “Revelation”).

**RST 340 History of Christian Thought: Augustine through the Reformation**

(3 credits)

This course explores the sweep of ideas, people, cultural influences, and socio-political forces at work in shaping Christian thought and practice from the fourth century to the Reformation. It is highly recommended that the student complete Christian Origins before enrolling in this course.

**RST 345 Foundations of Modern, Western Religious Thought** (3 credits)

This course surveys theology and philosophy of religion from the 17th through the 19th centuries (the Enlightenment through Romanticism). Special attention is given to thinkers who reshaped the understanding of religion in the West such as: Hume, Kant, Schleiermacher, and Hegel. Themes such as the doctrine of God, arguments for God’s existence, theodicy, reason, science and religion, will be explored.

**RST 350 Modern Christian Theology** (3 credits)

Through the works of major 20th century theologians, this course analyzes a variety of trends in modern Christianity, including such perspectives as neo-Orthodox, process, and feminist thought. The emphasis will be on understanding theology as a critical and systematic discipline wherein affirmations about the nature of God and humanity entail logical, philosophical, doctrinal, and ethical consequences. It is highly recommended that the student complete Christian Origins and/or Foundations of Modern Western Religious Thought before enrolling in this course.

**RST 355 Theological Roundtable I, II, III, IV** (3 credits)

This course will explore a range of contemporary world issues and the relevance of theological study for analyzing these issues. Relevant topics include: religion and the public forum, religious fundamentalism, globalization, nationalism, and peace and war. Depending upon the current social context themes addressed in the course will change. I. God, Evil and Suffering; II. God and Democracy; III. God, Peace and War; IV. God and Globalization.

**RST 360 Global Christianity and Ecumenism** (3 credits)

The shape of Christianity is changing. Much of the change is due to the shift from the West and North to the South as Christianity moves to Africa, Asia, and South America. Christianity is also changing as a result of inter-religious and intra-religious dialogue. This course surveys these developments. (When possible the course will extend into the summer concluding with an educational trip to the World Council of Churches’ Ecumenical Institute near Geneva, Switzerland.)

**RST 453 Senior Portfolio** (1 credit)

Each graduating major in religious studies will be required to present a portfolio to the faculty of the department for discussion at the conclusion of the final semester of the student’s senior year.

**RST 465 and PHI 465 Senior Seminar** (2 credits)

Philosophy and Religious Studies Seminar for seniors. Meets with PHI 365/RST 365. Required of all seniors majoring in Philosophy and Religious Studies. Application of learning in the major to a discussion and analysis of a current issue in philosophy or religious studies, including analysis and discussion of recent literature on current issues. Synthesis in a major essay the learning as a Philosophy and Religious Studies major around a single theme.