EXPLORE THE WORLD
STUDY RELIGION
To become a Religious Studies major or minor, contact our undergraduate advisor, Will Smith, at wsmithii@indiana.edu or 812-855-2736.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR A MAJOR DEGREE**

- A minimum of 30 credits in Religious Studies.
- At least one upper-level course in each of the following areas:
  - A: Africa, Europe, and West Asia
  - B: South and East Asia
  - C: The Americas
  - D: Theory, Ethics, Comparison
- Majors Seminar in Religion.
- At least four additional courses at or above the 300 level.
- At least one more course at the 400 level.
- A maximum of two 100-level courses.

**REQUIREMENTS FOR A MINOR DEGREE**

- A minimum of 15 credit hours in Religious Studies.
- At least one upper-level course from three of the following four areas:
  - A: Africa, Europe, and West Asia
  - B: South and East Asia
  - C: The Americas
  - D: Theory, Ethics, Comparison
- At least three courses must be at or above the 300 level.
- No more than two 100-level courses.
- Critical Approaches courses taught by Religious Studies faculty can be counted in the minor.

Please refer to the Undergraduate Bulletin for more details.
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What is religion? Where does it come from? What does it do? How should we study it? This course introduces students to the many different ways that theorists and scholars of religion have tried to answer these questions, as well as the ways in which these questions became questions at all. Students will learn that our understanding of religion and the meanings we give to that term are largely founded upon competing claims about the existence of God, differing values that have been assigned to religion, and conflicting interpretations about religion's role in shaping culture, politics, society, and the self.
This course will introduce students to the religious traditions of Asia. More specifically, it will examine Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto. We will spend much of the semester engaging questions such as, what is religion? How do the adherents of Asian religious traditions talk about their own tradition and the traditions of others? What issues did the authors of Asian religious texts believe to be at stake in the texts they produced? In particular, we will explore the following question from the view of each religious tradition: What kind of world do we live in, and what are human beings to do about this world?

After a brief overview, we will spend several weeks studying the beliefs and practices of each religious tradition. We will also study in depth one major text from each tradition. All readings are in English. No prior knowledge of Asia or religion is necessary.

What is “religion”? How has the American religious landscape changed in the last 300 years? What does it mean to be “religious” in America? Why do many Americans identify as “spiritual, but not religious”? Where can religion be found in American culture? In this course, we will look for signs of religion in some unexpected places: not just churches, synagogues, mosques, and temples— but also theme parks, Disney movies, YMCAs, restaurants, hospitals, public schools, and sports stadiums. Our “texts” include music, films, websites, food, court cases, and walking tours. Besides traditional essays and exams, course assignments will ask you to make fresh observations of your everyday landscapes and relationships. This course is an “introduction” that assumes no prior knowledge of religion or American history.
In nuclear fire or alien invasion, under rising oceans or metallic waves of killer robots, depictions of the future are full of images of extinction. Can the human species survive? Should it? What if survival means having to leave Earth, or become something other than human? Popular media is crowded with scenarios where “Come Hell or High Water” we will innovate our way to survival. Course materials range from the ancient Babylonian story of the great flood to hit sci-fi series *Battlestar Galactica*; from Buddhist hackers to the scientific agonies of Frankenstein and Faust. Students will dive into these worlds of cyborgs, space exploration, transhumanism, and climate engineering to investigate ethics at the intersection of religion, science, ecology, and technology.

*This course is listed as REL-R 170 Religion, Ethics & Public Life.*

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**RELigion & SportS**

REL-R 175  MW 12:20-1:10P  + DISCUSSION  
PROF. COOPER HARRISS

On the appointed day supplicants file into the sacred chamber wearing the appropriate colors and symbols on their bodies and clothing. They chant in unison the words inherited from their ancestors, standing and sitting at crucial moments as they implore powers beyond themselves to intervene in human affairs, to vanquish the forces of evil, tilting the balance and bringing forth another Hoosier basketball victory over Purdue.

This course considers the many ways that religion and sports are alike and argues that you can learn a great deal about one through careful attention to the other. We'll consider how fans treat sporting events like sacred rites, examine the civil religion of the Super Bowl, delve into sports as religion (as with surfing), the peril of religious athletes (Tim Tebow, Sandy Koufax, or Muhammad Ali, for instance), sacred space, holy violence, and shrines of sacred memory (as with halls of fame). By the end of the semester you should have a new and deeper appreciation of the fascinating and complicated ways religion works that comes from looking closer at seemingly familiar materials. At the same time, you'll never participate in or observe even a simple sporting event again in quite the same way.
In this course students are offered a broad, introductory-level survey to the contents, culture, and interpretation of the Old Testament/Hebrew Bible. In addition to performing close readings of some of the most famous stories and laws in the Bible—such as Adam and Eve, Moses and the Exodus from Egypt, and the Ten Commandments—this course also covers substantive topics in the academic study of the Bible, including the rise of modern biblical scholarship, the Bible in its ancient Near Eastern context, the collective authorship of the Torah, and the complex relationship of the Bible to other writings extant in antiquity such as the Dead Sea scrolls and early Christian works. Throughout the course, students learn how the texts of the Hebrew Bible have been read and interpreted in different ways by ancient religious communities and by modern biblical scholars, an approach intended to encourage reflection on our own reading practices.

This course will explore the experience of Muslims living in Southeast Asia, primarily the Indonesian island of Java, through the myths, folktales, legends, and modern novels they have produced to represent their environments, challenges, and aspirations. The primary focus of the class will be on how Muslims, living in cultures heavily influenced by Hindu and Buddhist traditions, have sought to build communities that were sometimes cooperative with those around them and at other times resistant to what some see as corrupting influences that endanger Muslim identity. The purpose of the course is to explore theories of syncretism, acculturation, and religious identity through the matrix of stories Muslims have used to depict their worldviews. The course is divided into three sections and will introduce interpretive theories before launching into discussions of the stories. No prior knowledge of Islam, Hinduism, or Buddhism is necessary.
This course is intended to serve as an introduction to Buddhism, broadly conceived. We will survey the development of Buddhist thought and practice, from its origins in India to its subsequent expansions into other parts of the world. The course has two main aims: to familiarize you with basic Buddhist ideas and practices as these have taken shape in various historical and cultural settings, and to invite you to think critically and carefully about these ideas and practices and what they imply for those who espouse and engage in them. In pursuit of these aims, we will be reading a number of primary sources in translation, together with several additional texts that will help you to contextualize this material. We will be screening several films as well. No previous knowledge of Buddhism is necessary, nor will any be presumed.

“Hinduism” is the umbrella term for the vast and multifaceted traditions of at least 80% of the people of India, and of about one out of every five human beings on earth right now. In this short semester we can only begin to wrap our minds around its richness and diversity! Our goal is to gain some understanding and appreciation of the religious culture of many of those with whom we share this planet, to expand our own ideas of what it means to be human, and to broaden our understanding of what “religion” is. We will examine a variety of Indian religious expressions and explore their various meanings. Central to our exploration will be the constant tensions between different strands of Hinduism: renunciation vs. sensual desire, form vs. formlessness, monism vs. monotheism vs. polytheism, social duty vs. personal freedom, temple practices vs. meditative withdrawal and more. The challenge is to allow ourselves to accept that seemingly opposite tendencies are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and that we can hold more than one perspective at a time. Such is the extraordinary richness of religious expression in India, from time immemorial to the present day.
The essence of Deep Ecology is to ask deeper questions. We face many problems in the world today; many argue that these problems are deeply interconnected. Deep Ecology is one response to global problems. It seeks fundamental transformations in our views of world and self, claiming that there is no ontological divide in the forms of life. Deep Ecology, therefore, aims for an environmentally sustainable and spiritually rich way of life that recognizes the intrinsic value of all life forms and the enchantment of the world. This course involves an introductory examination of Deep Ecology from a Religious Studies perspective that investigates traditions in terms of their thought, action, and communities.

This is an introductory course to the study of Islam designed for students with little or no prior knowledge of the religion. The course begins with the historical emergence of Islam at around the seventh century AD, and concludes with the various forms that Islam has taken in the contemporary era. In-between these bookends, we will read about how Muslims have sought to put into practice the word of God and the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad by configuring and transforming various aspects of social life such as personal piety, education, law, gender relations, and so on. Apart from identifying the core beliefs and cultural practices that have defined Islam, we will also look at issues that have sparked unceasing debate and disagreement between Muslims. Some of the major theoretical concepts that will recur in our discussions include authority, interpretation, tradition, and representation.
Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431. She was accused of heresy and war crimes and feared by both the French and English kings. Her story was reported all over Europe. Almost six hundred years later she continues to fascinate many. Her life and trial raise questions about the relationship of religion, law, and politics, the intersection of church and state, the construction of gender, the law of war, authority and authenticity in matters of personal spiritual experience, religious and psychiatric explanations for hearing voices. All of these questions continue to interest her many fans. Joan was the object of five trials. This class will focus primarily on the record of the trial of condemnation, setting the trial, the charges, and its aftermath in the context of fifteenth century religion, law and politics as well as considering the later religious, legal, cinematic, literary and political lives of Joan right down to the present. Who was Joan? Who is she? Can we separate her from the legend? Can we know the historical Joan? Why do we still admire her?

*This course is listed as REL-A 300 Issues in Religion in Americas.

This course surveys the history and literature of ancient Christianity from its origins as a Jewish sect in Palestine to its establishment as the official religion of the Roman Empire in the fifth century. Topics include persecution and martyrdom, scripture, Gnosticism, theological controversies over the Trinity and the nature of Christ, Constantine and the establishment of Catholic orthodoxy, the rise of monasticism, and important figures such as Augustine. The course will emphasize the variety of early Christian groups and will provide a good foundation for the study of Christianity in any later period. It is something of a sequel to Rel A220 (“Introduction to the New Testament”), but there are no prerequisites, and no previous study of Christianity is assumed.
From eighteenth-century Great Awakening revivals to twenty-first-century presidential campaigns, evangelicals—and Pentecostal and Charismatic movements within evangelicalism—have played a vital role in shaping American cultural, social, and political institutions. Who are evangelicals? What do they believe, and how do they behave? Should non-evangelicals be worried about them? This course explores the causes, nature, and implications of evangelical influence through the lenses of history, literature, and religious studies—drawing upon fiction, poetry, autobiography, music, television, film, ethnography, and food.

This course explores Buddhist art and its multiple social and ritual contexts, with particular attention given to works produced in India and Tibet. As a course offering in religious studies, the class is not intended to substitute for a course in art history or philosophical aesthetics. It is, instead, designed to provoke reflection on the roles played by works that we identify as “artistic” in the religious life of Buddhist communities over time, and on the conceptual presuppositions that inform, and consequences that follow from, labeling certain human artifacts as works of Buddhist art. What needs to be in place for an object or performance to count as an instance of Buddhist art? What are the salient features of these works? How have they been—and how are they now—understood, discussed, and used by Buddhists and others? How might attention to these issues change our understanding of the nature and functions of Buddhist—and, more broadly, religious—art? What effects have forces of modernism and globalization had on the practices and presuppositions of Buddhist artists working in India, Tibet, and beyond?
The depictions of women in the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament tell us not only about gender in the ancient world, but also about the models of femininity available to Jewish and Christian women for centuries after. Women appear in biblical texts as wives and mothers, queens and prostitutes, heroines and villains. Jewish and Christian readers of biblical texts in Late Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the modern world interpreted these representations of women in ways that both reflected and created contemporary attitudes about women, gender, and sexuality. This course will explore the portrayal of women in both the texts of the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament, and in the literature and art of later readers of biblical texts. How have these biblical texts and their interpretation shaped ideas about women and gender in Western culture, from antiquity to the contemporary world?

This course focuses on fictional narratives of cyborgs, sentient machines, and engineered humans as speculative fiction. It explores issues such as what it means to be human, the nature of consciousness, and the prospect of augmenting our bodies through technology. As we will explore in the course, these issues are directly relevant to concerns at the heart of both anthropology and religious studies, not to mention to fields such as robotics and computational neuroscience. Specific questions that we will explore will include: How would sentient beings created by humans differ from humans who are born naturally? Can we draw a clear line between a human and a machine? What kind of rights and responsibilities would conscious machines have in our society? What might be the benefits and dangers of creating conscious machines?

*This course is listed as REL-D 375 Religion & Literature. Register for your preferred listing.
The devotional literatures of India have remained popular for centuries. Cutting across religious boundaries, from brief lyrical poems to longer allegories, the material presents us with a wide range of views of the Divine, and can help us to appreciate the richness and diversity of Indian civilization and culture.

We’ll read works by such writers as Antal (South Indian woman poet); Kabir (from North India; his followers still can’t agree on whether he was Muslim or Hindu!); Mirabai (Rajasthani princess-devotee of Krishna); Jayadeva (whose composition on the love between Radha and Krishna scandalized some); and others, and look at contemporary treatments of these writers and of devotion. Students interested in a particular medieval devotional author (whether or not s/he is officially on the syllabus) will have the opportunity to pursue that interest. Other resources we’ll use include recorded versions of many of these pieces, devotional films, and contemporary Bollywood (Hindi popular cinema).

As we study Indian esthetic theory and the various devotional traditions, students will participate in classroom discussions designed to assist them to complete a series of increasingly complex assignments, culminating in a final paper exploring some of the questions the devotional literature raises.

*This course is listed as REL-D 375 Religion & Literature. Register for your preferred listing.

Catholicism is often synonymous with controversy. Popes and nuns, priests and the Virgin Mary, clerical sex abuse and debates about abortion—all loom large in the public imagination. In this course we’ll study a history that stretches from Martin Luther’s critique of the Roman church’s corruption to recent controversies surrounding Pope Francis. We begin by exploring the place of Catholicism in the modern imagination, with Graham Greene's classic novel, *The Power and the Glory*. We then turn to key historical figures and events, including Luther's challenge and the Church's response; controversies surrounding the figure of...
The Life and Legacy of Muhammad will explore the ways in which sacred biography is used in various contexts to develop theories of authority and history. The course will begin by examining a number of different theories of religious authority and then move on to how biography is formative in developing “orthodox” methods of interpreting revelation as a means of understanding the relationship between humans and God. We will then focus specifically on the biography of Muhammad (d. 632 CE) written by Ibn Ishaq (d.767). We will explore the development of Muhammad biographical traditions in Islam and how particular forms of biography (legal and quasi-legal traditions that relate specific information thought to originate with Muhammad) were used by Ibn Ishaq in various contexts and how changing cultural circumstances in the early Abbasid period influenced the evolution of popular understandings of Muhammad’s life. Specifically, we will focus on how Ibn Ishaq used various pre-existing cultural and religious themes and motifs common in late antique and early medieval Mediterranean culture to create an image of Muhammad as a prophetic authority.

Mary and female Catholic visionaries; and a shocking story about the Church’s kidnapping of a Jewish boy in the nineteenth century. The final section of the course will focus on twentieth century controversies, including Liberation Theology, the ordination of women, clerical sex abuse, and the legacy of Vatican II. Background knowledge of Christianity is helpful but not required: the crucial prerequisite is interest in analyzing how religious traditions adapt and change over time, and how a particular tradition (in this case, Catholicism) comes to be defined as “traditional” or “conservative” rather than “modern”.

*This course is listed as REL-A 450 Topics in the History of Christianity.
Course listings are subject to change. Please check on Student Information System (SIS) or the Schedule of Classes website for updated dates and times. We have a very dedicated teaching faculty and an active student organization. More information can be found at www.indiana.edu/~relstud/.

COLLEGE OF ARTS AND SCIENCES BLOOMINGTON