

DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

COURSE GUIDE
2024-2025

**DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE GUIDE
2024-2025**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.	Faculty	.....	3
2.	Introduction to the Department	.....	4
3.	Knowledge of Two Major Religious Traditions	.....	4
4.	Departmental Programmes	.....	4
5.	Services Available to Students	.....	7
6.	The Boyd Sinyard Award	.....	7
7.	Concordia Religion Students' Association	.....	8
8.	Course Offerings & Descriptions 2024-25 Summer/Fall/Winter	.....	9
9.	Department of Religions and Cultures 2024-25 Fall/Winter Timetables	20

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This course guide has been prepared months in advance of the 2024-2025 academic year and information contained herein is subject to change. Students are advised not to purchase any texts without the approval of the professor concerned.

Due to the renumbering of courses in the Department, students should consult the list of equivalent undergraduate courses in the back of the 2024-2025 undergraduate calendar.

FACULTY

A list of the full-time faculty follows below. All possess degrees from universities and/or schools of advanced studies that represent the best academic centres for the study of religion in North America. All have published books that have made a contribution to their particular fields of study, have published in learned journals and given papers at learned societies. They have also won a reputation among their students for being good teachers, concerned about the quality of instruction at Concordia University, as well as for being "available" and committed to the development of a more meaningful student life.

Full-Time Faculty

Chair

Naftali Cohn, Ph.D. (University of Pennsylvania)

Professors

Lynda Clarke, Ph.D. (McGill)

Carly Daniel-Hughes, Ph.D. (Harvard)

Lorenzo DiTommaso, Ph.D. (McMaster)

Richard Foltz, Ph.D. (Harvard)

(sabbatical winter 2025)

Norma Joseph, Ph.D. (Concordia)

Leslie Orr, Ph.D. (McGill)

Norman Ravvin, Ph.D. (Univ. of Toronto)

Associate Professors

Marc des Jardins, Ph.D. (McGill)

Assistant Professors

Sowparnika Balaswaminathan, PhD (University of California)

Miranda Crowds, PhD (The City University, London)

Marc Lalonde, Ph.D. (Concordia)

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT

General Objectives

The Department of Religions and Cultures is dedicated to the academic study of multiple religious and cultural groups in Canada and around the world. Our focus is on cultural phenomena, sometimes in comparative context, typically with attention to history, systems of thought and practices, literature and pop culture, power, gender, and sexuality.

Nature of the Study of Religions and Cultures

The academic study of religion is a multidisciplinary enterprise. Current emphases in the department include decolonizing, gender and sexuality, feminism, intersectionality, history,

ethnography and fieldwork, literature, moving images, pop culture, systems of thought, and ethics.

KNOWLEDGE OF TWO MAJOR RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS

The Department believes that every Major or Honours student in Religion or in Judaic Studies should possess, at time of graduation, a knowledge of at least two major religious traditions. For example, the student who is pursuing a Major in Judaic Studies will take some courses in a religious tradition other than Judaism. This basic principle reinforces the emphasis upon the centrality of the discipline of the History of Religions. A particular religious tradition can best be understood in the context of the general religious history of humankind.

DEPARTMENTAL PROGRAMMES

The Department of Religions and Cultures offers at the undergraduate level: minors, majors and honours programmes in Religion and in Judaic Studies. The degree requirements for all of these programmes can be found below. We also offer several graduate programmes: an M.A. in Religions and Cultures, an M.A. in Judaic Studies, and a Ph.D. in Religion. For further information on our graduate programmes, please contact the MA graduate programme director: Lynda.clarke@concordia.ca

Women, Gender and Sexuality

As part of the Department of Religions and Cultures' undergraduate curriculum, a concentration in **Women, Gender, and Sexuality** is offered. A variety of special courses are included in the regular program for the BA major in Religions and Cultures. Religions and Cultures majors can focus on this area for either the primary or secondary concentration requirements.

The study of women and religion is a growing field in which the Department of Religions and Cultures of Concordia University has long been a leader. This structured concentration solidifies our commitment to this field and enables us to prepare students in a systematic and consistent fashion. The concentration furthers the work of the department in that it will allow students to pursue course work from a comparative, cross-cultural and multi-tradition perspective. The study of the role of women in the history and practice of religion introduces our students to an exciting and vital area of study.

Degree Requirements

60 B.A. Honours in Religions and Cultures:

- 12 cr in a language related to thesis; or in a related discipline such as Anthropology, Classics, English Literature, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Women's Studies
- 6 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
- 15 cr chosen from the following groups: Tradition; Region
- 12 cr chosen from the following groups: Themes in Religions and Cultures; Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- 6 cr chosen from Religions and Cultures courses at the 300 or 400 level
- 3 cr RELI 409 Methodology and the Study of Religion
- 6 cr RELI 410 Honours Thesis

42 B.A. Major in Religions and Cultures

- 6 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
- 15 cr chosen from the following groups: Tradition; Region
- 12 cr chosen from Themes in Religions and Cultures; Women, Gender, and Sexuality
- 3 cr RELI 409 Methodology and the Study of Religion

24 Minor in Religions and Cultures

- 6 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215, 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227
- 18 cr additional elective Religions and Cultures courses at the 200, 300, and 400 level

60 B.A. Honours in Judaic Studies

- 9 chosen from: HEBR 210⁶, HEBR 241, HEBR 242, RELI 401
Students who demonstrate fluency in Hebrew by a written examination may substitute RELI courses at the 300 and 400 level approved by the departmental advisor.
- 3 chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215
- 12 chosen from RELI 220, 301, 326, 327, 328
- 27 chosen from courses in Judaism at the 200, 300, or 400 level. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course. Up to 12 credits may be substituted with courses in a related language such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish, for a maximum of 15 credits combined.

42 B.A. Major in Judaic Studies

- 9 cr Hebrew language, chosen from HEBR 210, 241, 242, RELI 401
*students who demonstrate proficiency in Hebrew may substitute religions courses at the 300 or 400 level approved by the undergraduate advisor
- 3 cr chosen from RELI 209, 210, 214, 215

- 15 Electives chosen from courses in Judaism at the 200, 300, or 400 level. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course. Up to six credits may be substituted with courses in related traditions and related languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish.
- 3 RELI 409³

24 Minor in Judaic Studies

- 3 Chosen from RELI 209³, 210³, 214^{3 a} 215³
- 9 Chosen from RELI 220³, 301³, 326³, 327³, 328³
- 12 Electives chosen from courses in Judaism at the 200, 300, or 400 level. Up to six credits may be substituted with courses in related traditions and related languages such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish

24 Minor in Iranian Studies

- 12 Chosen from RELI 227³, 305³, 306³, 313³, 317³, 318³
- 12 Chosen from any courses related to Iran in various departments at Concordia approved by the undergraduate advisor, including those not already taken at the first level of requirement. Examples of courses offered at various times include Pahlavi and other ancient Iranian languages, Modern Persian, Iranian Mythology, Manichaeism, Avesta, and Classical Persian Music. Students may also request credit for Iran-related courses taught at other Quebec universities.

Course Groups:

Tradition

RELI 220, 223, 224, 225, 226, 230, 231, 301, 307, 308, 311, 313, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 324, 326, 327, 328, 332, 333, 334, 336, 337, 343, 344, 346, 350, 351, 363, 364, 368, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 390, 391, 392, 394, 395, 397, 401, 402, 404, 405, 407

Region

RELI 214, 215, 227, 306, 308, 315, 329, 332, 334, 336, 347, 348, 351, 353, 360, 361, 362, 375, 393

Themes in Religions and Cultures

RELI 209, 210, 216, 235, 298, 300, 310, 312, 325, 331, 354, 355, 357, 358, 365, 366, 370, 371, 373, 374, 378, 379, 394, 396, 398, 410, 496, 498

Women, Gender, and Sexuality

RELI 233, 372, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 393, 420

Southern Asia Studies

The Department of Religions and Cultures participates with History, Political Science and several other departments in the Southern Asia Studies Programme which offers a major and a minor as follows:

MAJOR in Southern Asia Studies (42 credits)

3 cr chosen from:

RELI 215 Religions of Asia

RELI 348 Religion and Society in South and Southeast Asia

3 cr chosen from:
HIST 261 History of South Asia
HIST 364 Modern South Asia

3 cr chosen from the following group:
History of South and Southeast Asia courses (see UG calendar)

9 cr chosen from the following group:
Religions and Cultures of South and Southeast Asia courses (see UG calendar)

6 cr chosen from the following group:
Theory and Method courses (see UG calendar)

18 cr chosen from the following group:
Electives in South and Southeast Asia (see UG calendar)

Minor in Southern Asia Studies (24 credits)

3 cr chosen from:
RELI 215 Religions of Asia
RELI 348 Religion and Society in South and Southeast Asia

3 cr chosen from:
HIST 261 History of South Asia
HIST 364 Modern South Asia

18 cr chosen from the following group:
Electives in South and Southeast Asia (see UG calendar)

30 Certificate in Iranian Studies

- 18 Chosen from RELI 227³, 305³, 306³, 313³, 317³, 318³
12 Chosen from any courses related to Iran in various departments at Concordia approved by the undergraduate advisor, including those not already taken at the first level of requirement. Examples of courses offered at various times include Pahlavi and other ancient Iranian languages, Modern Persian, Iranian Mythology, Manichaeism, Avesta, and Classical Persian Music. Students may also request credit for Iran-related courses taught at other Quebec Universities.

For more information, contact:
Dr. Lynda Clarke: Lynda.clarke@concordia.ca

SERVICES AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS

Student Advising

Students who have questions concerning their programme of study or need assistance relating to academic difficulties can contact the Department either by phone (848-2424, ext. 2065) or email religion@concordia.ca and make an appointment to meet with an undergraduate advisor.

Undergraduate Listserve

Religion students and students taking one or more Religion courses have the option of being added to the Religion Undergraduate listserve. This listserve helps to keep students informed of upcoming events, guest speakers and academic deadlines.

Department Web Page

Visit the Department's webpage and find information on the various courses offered, course outlines, faculty research interests, guest lectures and conferences, information on our graduate programmes plus much more:

<https://www.concordia.ca/artsci/religions-cultures.html>

THE BOYD SINYARD AWARD

Each year the Boyd Sinyard award is given to the outstanding graduating student in Religions and Cultures. The award is named after the first chairman of the Department of Religion at Sir George Williams University.

**CONCORDIA RELIGIONS AND CULTURES STUDENTS'
ASSOCIATION (CRACSA)**

If you are studying within the Department of Religions and Cultures (i.e. if you are an Honours, Major, Minor or just taking a course offered by the department), you are a member of the CRACSA. CRACSA is a student-administered organization dedicated to fostering community and expanding the educational experience of all Religion students. Each year the executive branch of CRACSA (five students elected to plan and administer CRACSA affairs) offers Religion students the chance to meet each other and faculty at various social gatherings, as well as the opportunity to enliven their education by attending CRACSA sponsored lectures given by learned academics and religious thinkers from all parts of the world. CRACSA members are urged to take advantage of the student lounge located in the basement of annex R (2050 Mackay). This is a place where students can study, hang out or use the free phone. If you would like more information about CRACSA, leave a message in our mailbox at the Department of Religions and Cultures.

SUMMER 2024

RELI 210/1 - A (3 credits)
RELIGION IN PRACTICE

M.W. 1315-1600

This course focuses on the day-to-day practice of religious traditions. Included are the expression of religious experiences through art, music, and scripture; transmission of these religious expressions through ritual, worship and mystical/ecstatic practices; and the construction and maintenance of different types of religious authority and communal identities. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 211 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 378/1 - A (3 credits)
DEATH AND DYING

T.J. 1015-1300

This course provides a comparative perspective on the variety of conceptions and practices related to death and dying that are found in different world religions. In addition, the course considers how people in contemporary North American society utilize traditional religious concepts and rituals, scientific understandings and medical procedures, or innovative combinations of ideas and practices with which to cope.

FALL 2024

RELI 220/2- A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

T.J.0845-1000

This course will examine the history of Jews and of Judaism from ancient times until the present. It will emphasize the continuities, changes and interrelationships with respect to Jewish social, religious and intellectual life through the ages. It will also carefully examine the varieties of belief and practice in contemporary Jewish life. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 222 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 224/2 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO ISLAM

W.F.0845-1000

This course explores the religious tradition of Islam through the beliefs and practices of the vast number of Muslims scattered throughout the world – in the Middle East, South and Southeast Asia, North America, and other places. It examines the scriptures and common rituals or “pillars” of the religion, as well as expressions of life and culture in the past and present such as the law (shariah), mystical orders, and the arts.

RELI 225/2 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM

M.W.1015-1130

Hinduism is a tradition that is one and many, consistent and chaotic, fixable and constantly evolving. The idea of Hinduism as a singular religion has been argued to be a colonial disciplinary practice. Thus, with diverse philosophical strains of thought about the meaning and goal of life, the existence of divine presence(s), the quality of matter and the self, and the practical ways in which an individual can and should lead their life, Hinduism is a catch-all term for often contradictory beliefs. Furthermore, the proximity of multiple religious traditions in South Asia has led to syncretic practices, wherein the lines between religious, cultural, and secular can blur and shift. In this course, students will encounter the various ways in which Hinduism has been imagined, disciplined, and practiced, through sacred texts and commentaries, scholarly debates, practices and rituals, and aesthetic, visual, and performative traditions. We will examine beliefs and practices that can be canonically categorized as Hindu, as well as those that challenge such categorization, and others that demand a change in the definitional boundaries of Hinduism. Lastly, we will also look at how power and hierarchy are woven through this tradition, and discuss historical and contemporary political issues relevant for understanding how Hinduism functions in today’s world, and what “modern” Hindus would consider a good life.

Note: *Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 226/2 – A (3 credits) INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

T.J. 1145-1300

This course introduces students to the diversity of forms of Buddhism that have emerged in history and are practised today. It examines those aspects that are shared in common by Buddhists all over the world, including reverence for the Buddha, support of the monastic order, and adherence to the Buddha’s teachings. The course explores the ways in which these ideals and beliefs are expressed through such Buddhist practices as worship, study, pilgrimage, and meditation.

RELI 233/2 – A (3 credits)
INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN AND RELIGION

M.W. 1145-1300

This introduction to the particular problems and issues in the study of women and religion uses case studies from various religious traditions. The course presents a survey of the different levels of participation, the complex ritual activities, and the intriguing divine imagery associated with women that are found in many religious traditions. Questions pertaining to the contemporary feminist discourse on such topics as witchcraft, patriarchy, and goddess religions are also explored.

RELI 250/2 – A (3 credits)
DECOLONIZING THE LOCAL: CONCORDIA, MONTREAL, AND RESIDENTIAL SCHOOL HISTORY
(xlist HIST 298A)

T.J. 1015-1130

This course follows key trends at the forefront of Canadian recognition of colonialism and its impact on Indigenous people. It will use as its epicentre Concordia - the history of the land where the campus stands, and around it - to enliven our sense of pre-colonial lives and the meaning of contact in the places where we attend and teach classes. It will radiate outward toward the rest of the city that was the earliest area of settlement, to tell the story and the stakes of Christian missionizing and its relationship to colonial power. It will consider the links between local institutional and cultural histories and Canadian Residential Schools, which were initiated by the Federal government and run by a variety of churches and orders, including the Grey Nuns, a key Montreal institution linked with Concordia and its surroundings. We will make use of literary and other creative renderings, attend to the way Canadian cities developed around the colonial facts we explore, while examining, as well, Concordia's platforms for "Indigenization" and decolonization.

RELI 310/2 – A (3 credits)
SELF AND OTHER: IDENTITY AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT

T.J.1315-1430

This course considers ethical issues arising in the context of personal and interpersonal relations, families and friendships, and health and medical care. These issues are discussed in relation to traditional and contemporary moral perspectives, both religious and non-religious. Topics covered may vary from year to year, but may include discussions of conscience and career, privacy, sexual relations, harassment, substance abuse, abortion, euthanasia, and gay and lesbian relations.

RELI 312/2 – A (3 credits)
JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD

T.J.1615-1730

This course considers ethical issues arising in the context of social, legal, and political relations. These issues are discussed in relation to both traditional and contemporary moral perspectives, both religious and non-religious. Topics covered typically include discussions of social and economic inequality, welfare, poverty, just punishment, business ethics, public ethics, economic development, and sustainable development.

RELI 319/2 – A (3 credits)
MODERN ISLAM

W.F.1315-1430

This course surveys some of the questions raised by modernity for Muslims and the various responses Muslims have sought to formulate and put into practice. Issues addressed may include government, law, gender, relations with the West, and religious authority.

RELI 350/2 - A (3 credits)
THERAVADA BUDDHISM

M.W. 1145-1300

This course examines the early history, doctrine, institutions, and practices of Buddhism in India, and follows the development of Theravada Buddhism in the countries of Southeast Asia up to the present day.

RELI 360/2 – A (3 credits)
RELIGIONS OF CHINA

M.W. 14:45-16:00

This course concentrates on the historical development of Chinese religions from the earliest periods of Chinese civilization to contemporary times. It investigates the relationships among the classical religious traditions as portrayed through scriptures, commentaries, and rituals. Focus is placed on the unfolding of the five great religious currents of China: the classical imperial cults, Daoism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and popular cults.

RELI 382/2 – A (3 credits)
WOMEN, GENDER, SEXUALITY: Christianity

T.J. 14:45-16:00

This course examines the categories of women, gender, and sexuality, and the experiences related to those categories, in Christian contexts. Topics under investigation include feminist historiography, feminist, womanist and queer readings of primary sources and traditional Christian symbols, sexual practice and reproductive health, and the intersections of gender, race and colonialism. The course proceeds historically, offering examples from across the Christian tradition, but places emphasis on contemporary North America.

RELI 383/2 – AA (3 credits)
WOMEN, GENDER, SEXUALITY: ISLAM

J.1745-2015

The course explores various issues related to women and gender in Islam, including role models, ritual, gendered space, the rulings of Islamic law, and sexuality. The issues are examined principally through the lens of modern Islam and lives of modern Muslims, including those in Canada and the West.

RELI 396/2 – A (3 credits)
FOOD AND RELIGION

T.J.1315-1430

This course examines food cultures and food rituals and explores religious meanings and the making of religious identities. The preparing and sharing of food defines religious community and expresses religious values. In looking at food in several world religions, this course focuses on how food can serve as a medium of transmission and transaction, and on the roles that women and men, gods and ancestors, and other beings and forces have in this network.

RELI 3890/2 –A (3 credits)
QUEER SPIRITUALITIES

M.W.1615-1730

This course treats gender, sexuality, spirituality and religiosity from an intersectional and queer theoretical approach. It introduces students to histories and discourses around these interrelated areas of human experience. It also addresses the construction and production of queer spiritualities and the queering of religion. Topics may include global sexualities; celibacy, asexuality and queerness; queerness in history; colonial and post-colonial understandings of sexuality and religion; queer pornography; and tantric practice and other forms of esoteric spirituality.

RELI 398/2 –AA (3 credits)
SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
RELIGION AND POPULAR CULTURE

M.1745-2015

This course explores the relationship between religion and popular culture. Topics for discussion include: the nature of modern popular culture; the topographies of popular culture in today's digitally integrated, superflat world; the nature of religion in a society that is inundated, saturated, and oriented by popular culture; the deployment and functions of traditional religious themes and tropes in new pop-cultural forms; and the global "apocalyptic shift" of the past generation and its pop-cultural expressions.

RELI 398/2 - BB (3 credits)
(xlist LOYC 398BB)
SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
SUSTAINABILITY AND RELIGION

W. 1745-2015

The environmental crisis is arguably the first truly global crisis that humanity has faced. Increasingly, scholars and others are coming to see it not as a crisis of technology but rather as one of values. Since religions are the primary source of values in any human society, we may look to the world's various religious systems to better understand how they place humans within the broader context of nature, how they teach us to value it, and what our responsibilities are towards the non-human world.

RELI 409/2 – AA (3 credits)
METHODOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION
Prerequisite: Permission of the department

M.1745-2015

This class explores the conceptual and practical foundations that have established the discipline and study of religion as it has developed over the last century or so. At the conceptual level we will be concerned to enquire: how have scholars gone about the study of religion? What sorts of approaches and methods have they relied on? What are the suppositions of these approaches and methods? What kinds of languages and philosophies have been used to explain such scholarly efforts? We will also attend to the various interests that have inevitably guided such research. What are these interests? What are their sources and inspiration? How are they related to wider social, cultural, and historical realities? Thus ours will be a critical examination of religious studies as we endeavour to understand, analyze, and situate the component parts that make up the method and study of religion today. However, we will also be concerned to put these critiques into practice. Toward that end, a portion of this course will be devoted to a guided fieldwork project.

WINTER 2025

RELI 209/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W. 1145-1300

THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION

This course explores the conceptual elements that underlie the religious experience. These elements include the notion of the sacred, beliefs, cosmologies and myths, the origins and understanding of evil, ethics and salvation. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 211 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 216/4– EC (3 credits)

online

ENCOUNTERING RELIGIONS

This course serves as an introduction to some of the religions of today's world, and explores several contemporary contexts where people of diverse religious backgrounds come into contact with one another. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 223/4 - A (3 credits)

T.J. 1445-1600

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY

This course provides an introductory survey of key developments and enduring structures in the historical evolution of Christianity. It examines the variety of expressions of faith embodied in different churches and traces the ways in which beliefs, institutions, symbols, and rituals have in the past and continue today to carry forward the Christian tradition as a world religion in a variety of cultural contexts.

RELI 235/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W.1315-1430

THE HOLOCAUST (HIST 235)

Beginning with a discussion of Jewish communities in Europe and America before 1933, this course traces the evolution of anti-Semitism, nationalism, and racism, the rise of Hitler and the Nazi movement, the shaping of Nazi ideology, the growing demonization of the victims of the Holocaust and the genocide against them in their various countries, resistance by the victims, and the parts played by bystanders in the outcome of the Holocaust.

RELI 298/4 – A (3 credits)

T.J.1315-1430

TOPICS IN RELIGION

PROPHETS, PROSTITUTES, WIVES

In this introductory course we will consider the representation of women's experiences and expressions in the narrative of the Hebrew Bible. How are women presented? We find prophets, prostitutes, wives, shepherds, and sisters. All sorts of women! Readings and discussion will interrogate both feminist theory and Judaic tradition. We will discover understandings that question traditional perspectives on women. A variety of popular, Jewish and feminist approaches will be discussed. We will challenge our notions of women's place and participation both in the past and as presented even today.

RELI 300/4 – A (3 credits) M. 1745-2015
CULTS AND RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY

This course takes a sociological and historical approach towards understanding new religious movements (NRMs), popularly known as “cults.” The course examines the reasons for their controversial status in society, and undertakes a survey of the beliefs, rituals, leadership, membership, recruitment strategies, and social organization of a number of specific NRMs.

RELI 312/4 – A (3 credits) T.J.1615-1730
JUSTICE AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN A GLOBALIZED WORLD
(xlist LOYC 398)

This course considers ethical issues arising in the context of social, legal, and political relations. These issues are discussed in relation to both traditional and contemporary moral perspectives, both religious and non-religious. Topics covered typically include discussions of social and economic inequality, welfare, poverty, just punishment, business ethics, public ethics, economic development, and sustainable development.

RELI 318/4 – AA (3 credits) J.1745-2015
SHIITE ISLAM

This course explores the history and ideas of Shiism, from the inception of the movement to the present. The various sects are introduced and studied, including the Twelvers, Ismailis, Druze, and Alawites. Shiite doctrines related to esoterism, quietism, and messianism are considered in comparison with other religions, while study of the modern period treats subjects such as theocracy, political activism, and martyrdom.

RELI 325/4 – A (3 credits) M.W.1445-1600
LEADERS, REBELS, SAINTS: BUDDHA

This course, which varies in focus from year to year, investigates the lives of controversial or influential women and men in the history of different religious traditions. Going beyond mere biography, the course situates particular figures within their social and cultural contexts, while dealing with how such prominent figures were viewed, portrayed, and used by others. Specific topics for this course are stated in the Undergraduate Class Schedule; examples are Moses, Jesus and Mary.

RELI 332/4 – A (3 credits) T.J.1145-1300
CANADIAN JEWISH LITERATURE
(xlist ENGL 398E)

This course explores the Jewish voice in Canadian literature which can be seen to be the first opening toward a multicultural tradition in this country. Writers such as A.M. Klein, Mordecai Richler, Henry Kreisel, and Leonard Cohen created an English-language tradition of Jewish writing that is varied, provocative, and lively. Students look at novels, short stories, some poetry, memoir, and criticism. Students also consider non-Jewish authors, such as Gwethalyn Graham and Mavis Gallant, who were among the first to write about Jewish characters for an English-speaking Canadian audience. This course allows students to consider issues related to Canadian identity and culture, ethnic studies, and multiculturalism alongside literary questions.

RELI 3350/4 – A (3 credits)

T.J. 1445-1600

THE BIBLE AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

This course introduces students to important literary works of the past century that update, revise, or provocatively interrogate established religious texts and narratives. It engages with the history and literary character of the Hebrew Bible and its influence on literary tradition, focusing on the way its narratives supply archetypal stories, characters, and motifs.

RELI 343/4 – A (3 credits)

T.J. 1445-1600

YOGA IN HISTORY, THOUGHT, AND PRACTICE

Yoga is best known in the Global North as a postural practice within the wellness industry. Although attributed to South Asia, and often specifically as a Hindu tradition, the origins and development of yoga are complex and diverse. What began as a semantic metaphor became a metaphysical tradition that evolved within and across religions and cultures, eventually taking its current form, as a body-forward healthcare regimen. In this course, we will examine the history of the philosophical body of knowledge called yoga, the diversity of its form and function, and the contemporary sociopolitical implications of its incarceration within the neoliberal self-care and wellness industry. Students will read primary sources such as the Vedas and Upanishads, Patanjali's Yogasastra, the Yogasutras to track the various meanings that can be attributed to yoga at different points of time and by various scholars and ascetic-philosophers. We will also explore the biographies of "gurus" in the modern period who emphasized and matured the disciplinary aspects of yoga, transforming it from a soteriological ideology to bodily practice. Finally, we will approach postural yoga in terms of its anthropological significance, and consider how it has been institutionalized, how it has been taken up as resistance, and the transnational flows of culture and capital that circumscribe its contemporary status.

RELI 355/4 – AA (3 credits)

M.1745-2015

RELIGION AND VIOLENCE

This course explores how religion may be seen to engender or exacerbate violence, as well as the ways that religion may critique, prevent or even offer alternatives to violence. Sacred writings, theologies, rituals and communal actions of particular communities are studied, as well as notions of the self, the group, others, outsiders and enemies. In particular, the life-work and writings of such key figures as Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King are studied in order to provide some religious perspectives on the relationship between non-violence and the resistance to injustice.

RELI 362/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W.1015-1130

RELIGIONS OF TIBET

The goal of this course is to familiarize students with current issues in Tibetan studies and to enhance understanding of Tibetan religion in Tibet, China and the rest of the world. It examines the "nameless" popular religions of Tibet, including mountain cults, shamanism, spirit possession and a variety of manifestations of popular religion. Students become familiar with the main schools of Tibetan Buddhism and the Bon religion, their history, dogma, lineages, philosophical enquiries, ritual and ascetic practices.

RELI 366/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND MUSIC
(xlist MHIS 398 B)

M.W.0845-1000

This course explores sacred music in its religious and cultural contexts. It examines the ways in which religion has served as an inspiration and performance context for music across the world, and some of the ways in which musical expression has been central to religious practice. Topics range from Gregorian chant to Quranic recitation, from Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh devotional song in South Asia to esoteric Tibetan chant, and from J.S. Bach to Gospel singing in African-American churches.

RELI 368/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W. 1145-1300

This course examines the diverse Indigenous Traditions in the context of Turtle Island, or North America. Foregrounding the perspectives of Indigenous peoples, the course considers the impact of settler colonialism on indigenous communities. Topics may include Christian missions, residential schools, indigenous views of sacred, the land, gender and sexuality, ethics, and storytelling.

RELI 380/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W. 1615-1730

RELIGION AND SEXUALITY

This course examines, from a comparative and historical perspective, the interplay between religion and sexuality. It looks at the development of attitudes towards sexuality within diverse religious traditions, and religious manifestations of sexuality. Topics include, among others: human reproduction, gender roles and identity, birth control, abortion, celibacy, sexual variance, and homosexuality.

RELI 394/4 – AA (3 credits)

T.1745-2015

HISTORY OF SATAN: EVIL PERSONIFIED IN JUDAISM AND CHRISTIANITY

This course investigates the origins, development, and significance of Satan in early Judaism and the history of Christianity. Consideration is given to some of the most important literary and visual depictions of this figure from the ancient world through the Middle Ages to present day. The course sheds light on how intellectuals thought of this figure and also how Satan came to play an important role in popular culture down through the centuries.

RELI 398/4 – A (3 credits)

J. 1745-2015

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
RELIGION AND HORROR FILMS

Horror films explore the hopes and fears of individuals and societies. Perhaps because religious traditions also engage in assuaging, explaining, and/or eradicating the same, and accept the supernatural as immanent, religious themes feature quite heavily in the horror genre. As categories and mediations, both horror and religion occupy interstitial spaces between mainstream and crowd pleasing, as well as cultic and esoteric. In this class, we will explore how religion is instrumentalized in narratives and visualizations of horror, and interrogate it as a site for negotiating personal and societal values, individual and institutional failings, and immediate and distant futures. The films are from diverse cultural, religious, and linguistic backgrounds, and thus, this class will also have a comparative purpose of examining how universal questions are contextualized and

engaged with differently. Students will engage with the films affectively, and consider what the medium of horror accomplishes through the incitement of fear, revulsion, sadness, as well as exaltation, exhilaration, and catharsis. Additionally, students will learn to analyze the medium of film with respect to the techniques and tropes of horror, write critical reviews that consider narratives in terms of their cultural and temporal milieu, and acquire an understanding of the category of religion as a lived practice.

RELI 398/4 – B (3 credits)
SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
SEX, GENDER, AND JEWS

T.J.1445-1600

This course explores diverse approaches to human sexuality and gender through the lens of Jewish culture and it investigates Judaism through the lens of gender and sexuality. Throughout the term, we will engage directly with a range of evidence, from ancient texts to archaeological artifacts to contemporary film and television. Our goal is to uncover insights and different approaches to these areas of human experience. Topics to be covered may include: divergent constructions of masculinity and femininity; non-binary, fluid, and trans gender; ritual, holiness, the body, and sexual activity; gender and everyday life; ethnic identity and sexual relations outside the group; homosexuality; marriage; procreation; and sexual assault. With each of the different topics, we will consider whether there are uniquely Jewish approaches to sexuality and gender, and what the lens of this particular cultural tradition can contribute to our understanding of this one facet of the human experience.

Department of Religions and Cultures - Timetable Fall 2024

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
0845-1000		220	224	220	224
10:15-11:30	225	250	225	250	
11:45-13:00	233 350	226	233 350	226	
13:15-14:30		310 396	319	310 396	319
14:45-16:00	360	382 3350	360	382 3350	
16:15-17:30	3890	312	3890	312	
17:45-20:15	398 AA 409		398 BB	383	
20:30-22:45					

Department of Religions and Cultures - Timetable Winter 2025

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
0845-1000	366		366		
10:15-11:30	362		362		
11:45-13:00	209 368	332	209 368	332	
13:15-14:30	235	298	235	298	
14:45-16:00	325	223 3350 343 398BB	325	223 3350 343 398BB	
16:15-17:30	380	312	380	312	
17:45-20:15	300 355	394		318 398A	
20:30-22:45					