



RELIGIONS AND CULTURES

FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

COURSE GUIDE

2021-2022

CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SCIENCE

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**DEPARTMENT OF
RELIGIONS AND CULTURES
UNDERGRADUATE COURSE GUIDE
2021-2022**

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www.kemetro.cc.mo.us/longview/socsci/philosophy/religion/symbols.htm

This course guide has been prepared months in advance of the 2020-2021 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 2021-2022 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)
(sabbatical 2021-2022)

Lorenzo DiTommaso, Ph.D. (McMaster)
(winter 2022 sabbatical)

Richard Foltz, Ph.D. (Harvard)

Norma Joseph, Ph.D. (Concordia)

Leslie Orr, Ph.D. (McGill)
(winter 2022 sabbatical)

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 religions and other social and cultural phenomena in so far as they have been influenced or affected by religions. We are interested in the comparative study of many religions. Although we

do study how many religious traditions articulate and defend their own self-understandings, we treat these theologies and buddhologies academically and comparatively.

Nature of Religious Studies

The academic study of religion is a multi-disciplinary enterprise. It involves the historical examination of religious movements, the literary analyses of their literatures, philosophical reflections on beliefs and teachings, the social scientific investigations of their rituals, practices, texts, and institutions, the psychological study of their participants and ethical inquiries regarding both their moral writings and social roles.

Correspondingly, the faculty in the department have been trained in a number of academic disciplines including history, sociology, anthropology, literary studies, philosophy, psychology and theology as well as in the study of particular religious traditions.

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 graduate programme assistant at 848-2424 ext.2077.

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 In a language related to thesis; or in a related discipline such as: Anthropology, Classics, English Literature, History, Philosophy, Sociology, Women's Studies.
- 6 Chosen from RELI 209³, 210³, 214³, 215³
- 21 From area of primary concentration (see areas of concentration below)
- 6 From area of secondary concentration (see areas of concentration below)
- 6 RELI elective credits at 300 or 400 level
- 3 RELI 409³
- 6 RELI 410⁶

42 B.A. Major in Religions and Cultures

- 6 Chosen from RELI 209³, 210³, 214³ or 215³
- 18 From area of primary concentration (see areas of concentration below)
- 6 From area of secondary concentration (see areas of concentration below)
- 9 RELI elective credits at 300 or 400 level
- 3 RELI 409³

24 Minor in Religions and Cultures

- 6 Chosen from RELI 209³, 210³, 214³ or 215³
- 18 RELI elective credits chosen in consultation with Departmental advisor, excluding RELI 209, 210, 214, and 215

60 B.A. Honours in Judaic Studies

- 9 Chosen from: HEBR 210⁶, HEBR 241³, HEBR 242³, RELI 401³
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 209³, 210³, 214³, 215³
- 12 Chosen from RELI 220³, 301³, 326³, 327³, 328³
- 27 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 12 credits may be substituted with courses in a related tradition and 12 credits with courses in a related language such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish, for a maximum of 15 credits combined
- 3 RELI 409³
- 6 RELI 410⁶

42 B.A. Major in Judaic Studies

- 9 Hebrew language, typically chosen from: HEBR 210⁶, HEBR 241³, HEBR 242³, RELI 401³
Students who demonstrate fluency in Hebrew may substitute religion courses at the 300 or 400 level approved by the undergraduate advisor.
- 3 Chosen from RELI 209³, 210³, 214³, 215³
- 12 RELI 220³, 301³, 326³, 328³

- 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, 214³ 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.

Areas of Concentration

A - Asian Religions (18 credits) - chosen from any of the following:

- 6 Chosen from RELI 224³, 225³, 226³, 360³, 361³, 362³
- 12 Chosen from any courses on the subject of Asian religions, including Islam. This may include courses not already taken from the first level of requirement. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course.

NOTE: With permission of the advisor, Major in Religions and Cultures concentrating in Asian religions may count up to six credits of a related language study, such as Chinese or Sanskrit. Honours students concentrating in Asian religions may also count an additional six credits of a related language study toward their program.

B - Christianity (18 credits)

- 6 RELI 223³, RELI 302³
- 12 Chosen from any courses on the subject of Christianity. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course.

NOTE: Majors in Religions and Cultures students concentrating in Christianity may count up to six credits of a related language study, such as Greek, Latin, or Coptic. Honours students concentrating in Christianity may also count an additional six credits of a related language study toward their program.

C - Judaism (18 credits)

- 9 Chosen from RELI 220³, 301³, 326³, 327³, 328³
- 9 Chosen from any courses on the subject of Judaism. This may include courses not already taken from the first level of requirement. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course.

NOTE: With the permission of the advisor, Major in Religions and Cultures students concentrating in Judaism may count up to six credits of a related language study, such as Hebrew, Aramaic, or Yiddish. Honours students concentrating in Judaism may also count an additional six credits of a related language study toward their program.

D – Women, Gender, and Sexuality (18 credits)

3 Chosen from RELI 233³, 380³

15 Chosen from any religion courses on women, gender, body, sexuality, or food. This may include courses not already taken at the first level of requirement. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course.

E – Islam (18 credits)

6 Chosen from: RELI 224³, 316³, 319³

12 Chosen from any courses on the subject of Islam. This may include a course not already taken at the first level of requirement. It is recommended that students take at least one 400-level course.

NOTE: With permission, Major in Religions and Cultures students concentrating in Islam may count up to six credits of a related language study, such as Arabic and Persian. Honours students concentrating in Islam must take at least six credits of Arabic and may also count an additional six credits of Arabic or another language related to Islam toward their program. Students who demonstrate competency in Arabic by a written examination may substitute Religion courses approved by the departmental advisor.

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 (42 credits)

6 credits History 261 and Religion 215

3 credits Chosen from any relevant course in the Department of History

3 credits Chosen from any relevant course in the Department of Political Science

6 credits Chosen from any relevant courses in the Department of Religions and Cultures

24 credits Chosen from relevant courses in any department including but not limited to History; Religion; Political Science; Classics, Modern Languages and Linguistics; Economics; English; Geography, Planning and Environment; Sociology and Anthropology; the Faculty of Fine Arts; and the John Molson School of Business. Students may also request credits for Southern Asia related courses (including languages) taught at other Quebec universities.

MINOR (24 credits)

6 credits History 261 and Religion 215

3 credits Chosen from any relevant course in the Department of History, Political Science, Economics or English

6 credits Chosen from any relevant courses in the Department of Religions and Cultures

9 credits Chosen from relevant courses in any department (see above)
Please see the Undergraduate Calendar for further details on the Southern Asia Studies Programme.

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 RELIGION STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (CRSA)

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 CRSA. CRSA is a student-administered organization dedicated to fostering community and expanding the educational experience of all Religion students. Each year the executive branch of CRSA (five students elected to plan and administer CRSA 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 CRSA sponsored lectures given by learned academics and religious thinkers from all parts of the world. CRSA 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 CRSA, leave a message in our mailbox at the Department of Religions and Cultures.

SUMMER 2021

RELI 226/1 - A (3 credits)

M.W. 1315-1600

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

Instructor: Perwaiz Hayat

This course introduces students to the diversity of forms of Buddhism that have emerged in history and are practiced 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 233/1 - A (3 credits)

T.J. 1015-1300

INTRODUCTION TO WOMEN AND RELIGION

Instructor: Josée Campion

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, matriarchy, and goddess religions are also explored.

FALL 2021

RELI 209/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J. 1615-1730

THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION

Instructor: Marc Lalonde

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 210/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J.1015-1130

RELIGION IN PRACTICE

Instructor:

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 214/2 – A (3 credits)

T.J. 1615-1730

RELIGIONS OF THE WEST

Instructor:

This course surveys the history, doctrines, institutions, and practices of religions that arose in Western Asia, including Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course examines contemporary forms of religious life in those parts of the world where these traditions have spread, as well as Indigenous religions. The course explores the religious activities and experiences of both women and men within these various traditions. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 213 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 215/2 – A (3 credits)

T. J. 1145-1300

RELIGIONS OF ASIA

Instructor:

This course surveys the history, doctrines, institutions, and practices of religions that have arisen in and spread throughout Asia, including Hinduism, Buddhism, and the religions of China and Japan. The course explores the religious activities and experiences of both women and men within these traditions. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 213 or RELZ 215 may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 220/2- A (3 credits)

T.J.0845-1000

INTRODUCTION TO JUDAISM

Instructor: Miranda Crowdus

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 223/2 - A (3 credits)
INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY
Instructor:

T.J. 1615-1730

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

W.F.1445-1600

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
Instructor:

T.J.1445-1600

This course surveys Hinduism in its diverse history, sects, schools of thought, sacred texts, spiritual practices, and contemporary interpretations. We will focus on several prominent dimensions of the tradition, including the Hindu temple, mysticism and metaphysics in the Upanisads, karma and rebirth, dharma (religious duty and the cosmic/social order), moksha (liberation), gender and caste, devotional traditions, and narrative literatures. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 300/2 – AA (3 credits)
CULTS AND RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY
Instructor: Lorenzo DiTommaso

M.1745-20:15

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. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 217 or for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

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

T.J.1315-1430

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 316/2 – AA (3 credits)
CLASSICAL ISLAM
(xlist HIST 398 AA)
Instructor: Richard Foltz

Th.1745-2015

The course explores the various aspects of Muslim civilization from its initial spread from Arabia to Spain, sub-Saharan Africa, India, and China, up to the age of the Ottoman, Safavid, and Mughal empires in the 16th and 17th centuries. Special attention is given to the emergence of schools of law, theology, philosophy, and mystical orders, as well as the literature, arts, and architecture of diverse Muslim societies.

RELI 331/2 - A (3 credits)
LITERATURE & THE HOLOCAUST
(xlist ENGL 398A)
Instructor: Norm Ravvin

T.J. 1315-1430

Religious, historical, literary, and political contexts have been applied to come to terms with the events of the Holocaust. All of these are relevant as students read important and provocative novels dealing with such issues as ethics, the relationship between art and history, the use of humour and popular cultural forms, as well as the way that storytelling helps direct our understanding of events that are often said to be incomprehensible. The wider impact of fiction dealing with the Holocaust on the popular media, including film, CD-ROMs, video, and news reporting, is also considered. **Note:** Student who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 398 number may not take this course for credit

RELI 350/2 – A (3 credits)
THERAVADA BUDDHISM
Instructor: Marc des Jardins

M.W. 13:15-14:30

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 372/2 - A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND THE BODY
Instructor:

T.J.1145-1300

This study of religious attitudes to the human body focuses on the body as a foundation for religious symbolism, religious community and identity, ritual, and religious experience. The course examines these problems with reference to various religious traditions. Issues examined include purification of the body; eating; mortification and mutilation of the body; attitudes towards dead bodies and physical immortality; attitudes towards bodies as gendered; embodied spirituality and incarnation.

RELI 378/2 – A (3 credits)
DEATH AND DYING
Instructor:

M.W.1015-1130

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.

RELI 383/2 – A (3 credits)
WOMEN AND RELIGION: ISLAM
Instructor: Lynda Clarke

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 387/2 –A (3 credits)
GODDESSES AND RELIGIOUS IMAGES OF WOMEN
Instructors: Norma Joseph and Leslie Orr

W.1145-1430

This comparative survey of female divinity and feminine imagery studies various religious traditions. Among the issues to be explored are the imaging of goddesses as mothers; the conception of forces like fertility, energy, materiality, and knowledge as feminine; the correspondences and relations between goddesses and women; and the contemporary feminist recovery of the Goddess.

RELI 396/2 – A (3 credits)
FOOD AND RELIGION
Instructors: Norma Joseph and Leslie Orr

M. 11:45-1430

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. **Note:** Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 398 number may not take this course for credit.

RELI 398/2 –A (3 credits)
(xlist LOYC 398 Q)
SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
QUEER SPIRITUALITIES
Instructor:

T.J. 1615-1730

This course treats the intersection of gender, sexuality, spirituality and religiosity from an intersectional and queer theoretical approach. It introduces students to histories and discourses around these inter-related areas and is organized thematically. It will also address the construction and production of queer spiritualities and the queering of religion. Topics under consideration include, as follows: global sexualities; celibacy, asexuality and queerness; queerness in history; colonial and postcolonial understandings of sexuality and religion; queer pornography; tantric practice and other forms of esoteric spirituality.

RELI 398/2 B – (3 credits)

Fr. 0845-1130

(xlist POLI 313 B)

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

RELIGION AND NATIONALISM: THE CAUCASUS

Instructor: Richard Foltz

Religion is often taken to be one of the principal markers of identity, and in modern times can overlap to a large degree with nationalism, even to the point where the two become conflated. The Caucasus, as one of the world's most ethnically and linguistically diverse regions, offers a particularly challenging case study for analyzing the interplay of religious and national identity, particularly since the fall of the USSR in 1991. This course will look at how the resurgence of national identities in the Caucasus region has been intertwined with an upsurge in religious ideologies whether Christian, Islamic, or nativist neo-pagan.

RELI 398/2 – C (3 credits)

M.W.1315-1430

(xlist LOYC 398 J)

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

RELIGION AND DISABILITY

(xlist LOYC 398J)

Instructor:

The field of Disability Studies is increasingly important across the Humanities and Social Sciences disciplines. This course will introduce students to the basic models and theories of Disability Studies, as well as to the critical body of work at the intersection of Disability and Religious Studies. We will examine how various traditions conceive of disability, and how the assumed 'disabled' body is figured in cosmologies, myths, and sacred texts; within concepts of sin and suffering, divine favour, prophecy and miracle; within the fraught dynamics of healing, wholeness, and cure; and in terms of inclusion or marginalization from ritual and communal life. We will also seek to uncover some of the ways in which disabled people experience and negotiate their religious contexts. Students will be asked to work toward a mutually respectful and trusting classroom environment in which at times difficult subjects can be productively discussed.

RELI 398/2 – D (3 credits)

M.W.1615-1730

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

MALCOLM X

Instructor:

Malcolm X was a black civil rights leader who made an indelible impact on North American society, black life, culture, and activism. He was also a devout Muslim. This course explores Malcolm X's life, his activism and ministry, and his ongoing importance for today. It places particular emphasis on his Muslim faith and the history of the Nation of Islam, of which Malcolm X was a part for much of his career.

RELI 409/2 – AA (3 credits)

T.1745-2015

METHODOLOGY AND THE STUDY OF RELIGION

Prerequisite: Permission of the department

Instructor: Marc Lalonde

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.

RELI 498/2 – B (3 credits)

M.1300-1515

ADVANCED TOPICS IN RELIGION

THE APOCALYPTIC IMAGINATION IN RELIGIONS AND CULTURES

Prerequisite: Permission of the department

Instructor: Lorenzo DiTommaso

This course investigates the broadband impact of apocalyptic speculation over the past fifty years. Topics for discussion include: the prevalence of apocalyptic themes and images in popular culture worldwide; the influence of apocalyptic expectations on views regarding the health of the economy and the destruction of the environment; the way that apocalyptic rhetoric shapes the grammar of social dissent and gives voice to oppressed and persecuted groups; the use of apocalyptic categories to isolate enemy groups, justify their demonization, and foment violent behavior against them; and the profound role of apocalyptic ideology in resurgent fundamentalist strains in every major religion today and in the platforms of nativist political movements and parties across the globe. (This is a seminar-format course in which both upper level undergraduate and graduate students will participate).

RELI 498/2 – A (3 credits)

T. 1600-1815

ADVANCED TOPICS IN RELIGION

AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND JEWISH IDENTITY

Prerequisite: Permission of the department

Instructor: Norman Ravvin

Autobiographical writing is a source of historical, cultural, and personal knowledge. This course will approach autobiography from a creative and scholarly standpoint. Areas of focus will include: writing by women and youth; autobiography as an exploration of traditional and modernizing trends; Jewish languages and print culture. We will read autobiographical writings from different eras as well as critical studies of this writing. Students will have the opportunity, as part of their written work, to write their own autobiographical diary or memoir. Course meetings will include conventional lectures as well as in-class discussion of students' writing. Students of Jewish history, literature, creative writing, and cultural studies will find their backgrounds intersect with the course's approach. (This is a seminar-format course in which both upper level undergraduate and graduate students will participate).

WINTER 2022

RELI 209/4 – A (3 credits)

W. 1745-2015

THE RELIGIOUS IMAGINATION

Instructor: Marc Lalonde

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

Instructor:

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 226/4 – A (3 credits)

W.0845-1130

INTRODUCTION TO BUDDHISM

Instructor:

This course introduces students to the diversity of forms of Buddhism that have emerged in history and are practiced 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 227/2 – A (3 credits)

Fr.0845-1130

INTRODUCTION TO IRANIAN CIVILIZATION

(xlist HIST 298A)

Instructor: Richard Foltz

Iran has played a central role in world history, giving rise to Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, and the Baha'i faith, as well as numerous sects. Iranian culture has also played a major role in informing and transforming Judaism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam. This course covers the long history of Iranian civilization and its influence on peoples from the Mediterranean world to South and East Asia in the realms of religion, literature, architecture, and the arts. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for RELI 412 or for this topic under a RELI 298 number may not take this course for credit.*

RELI 298/4 – A (3 credits)

M.W. 1145-1300

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

PROPHETS, PROSTITUTES, AND WIVES

Instructor: Norma Joseph

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 310/4 – A (3 credits) T.J.1615-1730
SELF AND OTHER: IDENTITY AND ETHICAL DEVELOPMENT
(xlist LOYC398C)
Instructor: Marc Lalonde

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 324/4 – A (3 credits) T.J. 1145-1300
ON THE MARGINS OF CHRISTIANITY
Instructor:

This course examines marginal forms of Christianity that have found themselves ignored, excluded, or suppressed by more mainstream Christian groups and institutions. Topics may include “heretical,” apocalyptic, millenarian, and charismatic movements. The course considers the practices, self-understanding, and worldviews of marginal forms of Christianity within their particular cultural, political, and historical contexts.

RELI 325/4 – A (3 credits) T.J.1315-1430
LEADERS, REBELS, SAINTS: OSCAR ROMERO
Instructor: Marc Lalonde

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 328/4 – A (3 credits) M.W.1315-1430
MODERN JUDAISM
Instructor: Miranda Crowdus

This course surveys the major historical events, sociological and political forces, and intellectual currents which shaped Judaism in the modern period as well as the ways that Jewish communities responded to these forces. Among the topics explored are Emancipation, forms of religious adjustment, anti-semitism, the experience of Jewish communities in Russia and North America, the Holocaust, and Zionism and the state of Israel.

RELI 344/4 – A (3 credits)
HINDU MYTH AND NARRATIVE
Instructor: Sowparnika Balaswaminathan

T.J.1015-1130

This course approaches Hinduism through its narrative literature, especially the great epics (the Mahabharata and Ramayana) and mythological texts (Puranas — the “Ancient Books”). Through stories of gods, devotees, villains, and heroes, the course explores the development of significant themes in the Hindu tradition, from ethics and philosophy to asceticism and devotion. An important focus of the course is the enduring cultural significance of myth and the epics, as retold through the ages in a variety of languages, cultural contexts, and media, including classical and vernacular texts, the oral tradition, drama, dance, and cinema.

RELI 348/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND THE ARTS IN SOUTH AND SOUTHEAST ASIA
Instructor: Sowparnika Balaswaminathan

T.J.1315-1430

This historical and sociological examination of religion’s impact on and intersection with the structures of South and Southeast Asian society, explores such issues as caste and class, gender and family relations, links between religion and the state, and relations between Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim communities

RELI 354/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND FILM
Instructor:

M.W.1315-1430

This course examines films that deal with religious themes — explicitly or implicitly — and provides an opportunity to analyze the language of film as a form of narrative through which cultural and religious ideas are transmitted **Note:** Students who have received credit for this topic under a RELI 398 number may not take this course for credit.

RELI 361/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGIONS OF JAPAN
Instructor: Marc des Jardins

M.W.1145-1300

This course uses a historical approach to understand the development of Japanese religious traditions. It investigates popular Japanese cults and religions, the assimilation of foreign religious thought and practices, and the implantation of Buddhism, Confucianism, and other models from China. Religious sectarianism, state-regulated religious schools, cults, and the role of religion in the establishment of Japanese national identity are also studied. **Note:** Students who have received credit for RELI 349 may not take this course for credit.

RELI 378/4 - A (3 credits)
DEATH AND DYING
Instructor:

T.J. 1015-1130

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

RELI 380/4 – A (3 credits)
RELIGION AND SEXUALITY
(xlisted LOYC 398F)

M.W. 1615-1730

Instructor:

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 386/4 - A (3 credits)
WITCHCRAFT, MAGIC AND RELIGION

T.J.1615-1730

Instructor:

This course approaches the study of magic, witchcraft, and religion from a variety of perspectives. Taking examples from indigenous cultures, the ancient world, medieval Europe, the early modern period and contemporary movements, the practices and rituals that have been labeled magic or witchcraft are examined, along with the responses to them. The course explores how magicians and witches view themselves, how different cultures relate to them, and how magic, witchcraft, and religion merge and diverge. **Note:** *Students who have received credit for this topic under an RELI 398 number may not take this course for credit.*

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

M.W. 1445-1600

Instructor: Naftali Cohn

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.

RELI 398/4 – B (3 credits)
(xlist ENGL 398 C)
SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION
HEBREW BIBLE AND CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE

T.J. 1445-1600

Instructor: Norman Ravvin

This course will introduce students to important literary works of the past century that aim to update, revise or provocatively interrogate established religious texts and narratives. We will discuss the history and literary character of the Hebrew Bible and its influence on literary tradition. We will focus on the way its narratives supply archetypal stories, characters and motifs. The urge to rewrite aspects of the biblical tradition recurs

over time, and our era is one of great literary vitality in this area. Students interested in Jewish canonical texts, modern literary canons, popular literature, and the relationship between religious and secular culture will find engaging material in our readings.

RELI 398/4 – C (3 credits)

T.J. 1145-1300

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

WOMEN AND RELIGION: HINDUISM AND BUDDHISM

(xlist LOYC 398 H)

Instructor:

This course takes as its premise the idea that the nexus of gender and sexuality fundamentally shapes religious practices and belief as well as the lives of women and gender non-conforming people. The central questions guiding this course are: How do religious traditions incorporate sexual practice and/or restraint into a vision of ethical life? When does one's gender become dangerous or unethical? What is the range of women's experience within Hinduism and Buddhism? In pursuing these questions, students will gain a deep familiarity with practices of women's religious asceticism, the place ofotics within religious discourse, new perspectives on queer and transgender theories, emic feminisms, and sexual ethics.

RELI 398/4 – AA (3 credits)

Th.1745-2015

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

THE SILK ROAD

(xlist HIST 398 AA)

Instructor: Richard Foltz

The Silk Road is a concept used to refer to a network of overland trade routes that linked the Mediterranean, China, and India from around the beginning of the Common Era to the fifteenth century. A conduit for culture as well as material goods, the Silk Road played a major role in the development and transmission of Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism, and Islam. Iranian, Indic, Chinese, and shamanistic religions were also part of this dynamic mix..

RELI 398/4 – E (3 credits)

T.J.1015-1130

SELECTED TOPICS IN RELIGION

SAINTS, SINGERS AND SONGWRITERS: JEWISH MUSIC

Instructor: Norman Ravvin

This course will explore music as part of canonical religious tradition, as part of popular culture, and as creative work. Jewish religious music is little understood – the Psalms were set to musical arrangements that we no longer know about. In Europe, over centuries, Jews could not be part of the mainstream musical undertakings of majority culture. This shifted in the Enlightenment period. A fascinating singular tradition is that of the klezmer musician, a professional position for male Jewish musicians that lasted from the seventeenth century to the beginning of the Second World War (and was transformed in North America into something different and new). Montreal presents an endpoint of sorts for klezmer culture, but its own creative forces can be explored through the musical career of Leonard Cohen, whose work will inform our concluding discussions.

Department of Religion - Timetable Fall 2021

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
0845-1000		220		220	398 B
10:15-11:30	378	210	378	210	398 B
11:45-13:00	396	215 372	387	215 372	
13:15-14:30	396 350 398 C	312 331	387 350 398 C	312 331	
14:45-16:00		225	224	225	224
16:15-17:30	398 D	209 214 223 398 A	398 D	209 214 223 398 A	
17:45-20:15	300	409		316 383	
20:30-22:45					

Department of Religion - Timetable Winter 2022

	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI
0845-1000			226		227
10:15-11:30		344 378 398 E	226	344 378 398 E	227
11:45-13:00	298 A 361	324 398 C	298 A 361	324 398 C	
13:15-14:30	328 354	325 348	328 354	325 348	
14:45-16:00	398 A	398 B	398 A	398 B	
16:15-17:30	380	310 386	380	310 386	
17:45-20:15			209	398 AA	
20:30-22:45					