



RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES  
PROGRAM

## Fall 2023 Course Descriptions

### **RELG 1110.001 - Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered: MWF 11:00-11:50am**

**Instructor:** Michael Candelaria, [mcandel@unm.edu](mailto:mcandel@unm.edu)

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion, focusing on Hinduism, Buddhism, the Chinese Religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Attention will also be given to oral/indigenous religions and the theories of religion.

### **RELG 1110.002 – Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered: TR 12:30-1:45pm**

**Instructor:** Daniel Wolne, [dsw1@unm.edu](mailto:dsw1@unm.edu)

This course is designed to give an introduction to the basic beliefs, practices, and texts of some of the world's major religions. The class will begin with an examination of Hinduism, and then move on to Buddhism, and then include a short section on Chinese religion & philosophy. After looking at these “Eastern” religions, we will examine the “Western” religious tradition, starting with a short section on Judaism, then looking at Christianity, and finally Islam

### **RELG 1110.003 – Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered: R 4:00-6:45pm**

**Instructor:** Franklin Yates, [fyates@unm.edu](mailto:fyates@unm.edu)

This course introduces major world religions and the scholarly methods of the academic study of religion. Religions covered may include Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and/or New Religious Movements.

### **RELG 1110.004 – Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered: First Half Term Online**

**Instructor:** Michael Candelaria, [mcandel@unm.edu](mailto:mcandel@unm.edu)

This course is an introduction to the academic study of religion, focusing on Hinduism, Buddhism, the Chinese Religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Attention will also be given to oral/indigenous religions and the theories of religion.

**RELG 1110.006 – Introduction to World Religions****Offered: Second Half Term Online****Instructor:** Staff

This course introduces major world religions and the scholarly methods of the academic study of religion. Religions covered may include Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and/or New Religious Movements.

**RELG 1110.008 – Introduction to World Religions****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Staff

This course introduces major world religions and the scholarly methods of the academic study of religion. Religions covered may include Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam and/or New Religious Movements.

**RELG 1550.001 - Religion, Health & Medicine****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Kelly Van Andel [kvanande@unm.edu](mailto:kvanande@unm.edu)

Religion, Health, and Medicine explores how people's religious beliefs and practices influence their perspectives on health and their approaches to medical care and treatment. In units arranged by religion or region (Native American religion, African religion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), students will learn how religious beliefs and practices relate to rites of passage, sexuality, women's health, diet, mental health, trauma, oncology, and end of life issues. In addition to assessing their knowledge of the relationship between religion and perspectives on health and medical care and treatment, course assignments will raise students' awareness of how people with different worldviews interact. Course requirements or activities also will teach students how to evaluate their own biases and how to assess the biases and credibility of various sources of information about religion, health, and medicine found on the Internet and elsewhere.

**RELG 1550.002 - Religion, Health & Medicine****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Kelly Van Andel [kvanande@unm.edu](mailto:kvanande@unm.edu)

Religion, Health, and Medicine explores how people's religious beliefs and practices influence their perspectives on health and their approaches to medical care and treatment. In units arranged by religion or region (Native American religion, African religion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam), students will learn how religious beliefs and practices relate to rites of passage, sexuality, women's health, diet, mental health, trauma, oncology, and end of life issues. In addition to assessing their knowledge of the relationship between religion and perspectives on health and medical care and treatment, course assignments will raise students' awareness of how people with different worldviews interact. Course requirements or activities also will teach students how to evaluate their own biases and how to assess the biases and credibility of various sources of information about religion, health, and medicine found on the Internet and elsewhere.

**RELG 2110.001 – Eastern Religions****Offered: TR 9:30-10:45am****Instructor:** Katherine Ulrich [kulrich@unm.edu](mailto:kulrich@unm.edu)

Eastern Religions is a thematic introduction to the religious life of peoples of Asia (mainly in India, Southeast Asia, China, Tibet, and Japan, with cameo appearances by Korea, Nepal, Mongolia, and/or Siberia). We examine the deities, practices, discourses, religious specialists, and subdivisions of the adherents of Asia's major indigenous religious traditions while examining two broad themes. The first is death: we consider practices and beliefs involving bodies, (no) soul(s), and various options for the afterlife (or immortality, in the case of Daoism). The second broad theme for the course is that of pilgrimage, the environment, and sacred space. How do religious beliefs and practices shape people's understandings of, movement to and through, and interactions with the environment around them? The religious traditions covered are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto, Shamanism, and the folk, popular, or new religions of India, China, and Japan.

**RELG 2110.003 – Eastern Religions****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Vibha Shetiya, [vs2015@unm.edu](mailto:vs2015@unm.edu)

This is a 3 credit hour survey course on Eastern Religions, with a focus on the religions of India, China and Japan. These include Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Jainism, Confucianism, Daoism, Shinto and Zoroastrianism. Charvaka, a religion no longer in existence, will also be briefly discussed. As part of this course, we will study the scriptures which will include a brief examination of primary texts, as well as how religion is practiced in everyday life through art, film and culture.

**RELG 2110.004 – Eastern Religions****Offered: First Half Term Online****Instructor:** Lisa Gerber [lgerber@unm.edu](mailto:lgerber@unm.edu)

This course is a survey of the Eastern religious traditions of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. We will be studying the main philosophical ideas of these religious traditions and pulling out the wisdom in these traditions. To do this, we will look at explanations of the religious traditions as well as primary texts, art, and culture. Pulling out the wisdom in each tradition allows us to understand and appreciate other religious traditions. Through this course you will be able to develop a solid understanding of Eastern religious tradition

**Required Texts**

- Feiser J. & Powers J., (2021). *Scriptures of the World's Religions: Custom Edition Eastern Religions* New York: McGraw Hill Custom text:
- Nesbitt, E. (2016). *Sikhism: A Very Short Introduction*. Second Edition Oxford: Oxford University Press (you can also use the first edition since it is in UNM's library)
- Easwaran, E., (2004), *Bhagavad Gita*. Boston: Shambhala Press

- Easwaran, E. (2005) *Dhammapada* Tomales, CA: Nilgiri Press
- Lao Tzu and Addiss, S. & Lombardo, S. translators (1993) *Tao Te Ching*, Indianapolis: Hackett

**\*Please note that you can use any edition for the three primary texts (*Bhagavad Gita*, *Dhammapada*, and *Tao Te Ching*). You can find the primary texts and the Sikhism text (electronic and hardcopy) in the UNM library. This will reduce your textbook costs.**

### **RELG 2110.006 – Eastern Religions**

**Offered: Second Half Term Online**

**Instructor:** Lisa Gerber [lgerber@unm.edu](mailto:lgerber@unm.edu)

This course is a survey of the Eastern religious traditions of Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Daoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. We will be studying the main philosophical ideas of these religious traditions and pulling out the wisdom in these traditions. To do this, we will look at explanations of the religious traditions as well as primary texts, art, and culture. Pulling out the wisdom in each tradition allows us to understand and appreciate other religious traditions. Through this course you will be able to develop a solid understanding of Eastern religious tradition

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### **RELG 2120.001 - Western Religions**

**Offered: TR 11:00-12:15pm**

**Instructor:** Charles Becknell, [cbeck@unm.edu](mailto:cbeck@unm.edu)

This course surveys the beliefs, practices, and sacred writings of Judaism, Islam, Christianity, and indigenous traditions. The course is interdisciplinary in that it includes historical and social materials, literary and artistic expressions, and philosophical and theological insights. In a world that has become increasingly aware of its cultural diversity and richness, one way to gain access to that diversity and value is by exploring the religious consciousness and practice of a people.

**RELG 2120.003 - Western Religions****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Hilary Lipka, [hlipka@unm.edu](mailto:hlipka@unm.edu)

In this class we will focus on the three major religions of the western world: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, tracing the development of each of these religions from their origins up through modern times, and familiarizing ourselves with the major texts, movements, practices, and essential beliefs of each. We will consider each of these religions' origins, development, fundamental ideas, beliefs, rituals, and practices, and develop a sense of what each of these religions mean for the people who practice them and live by them. By the end of this class, you should understand the foundational elements of these religions and acquire enough basic religious studies expertise to pursue further study on your own.

**RELG 313.001 – Islamic Fundamentalism****Offered: TR 2:00-3:15pm****Instructor:** Mozafar Banihashemi, [mozafar@unm.edu](mailto:mozafar@unm.edu)

This course introduces students to the social, political, and cultural study of Islamic fundamentalism. The content of the course is directed toward understanding the relationship between socio/political life and fundamentalist trends in the Muslim world. The course focuses on the cultural, historical, and political developments in Muslim societies that led to the resurgence and decline of fundamentalist trends in the contemporary Islamic world. In this connection, various themes such as modernity, tradition, fundamentalism, conservatism, orthodoxy and orthopraxy, and Islamic theory of state among many others will be discussed. Furthermore, the course will comparatively address Sunni and Shi'ite fundamentalism drawing on examples from recent developments in major Middle Eastern societies.

**RELG 335.001 – Goddesses and Gods on India****Offered: TR 11:00-12:15pm****Instructor:** Katherine Ulrich [kulrich@unm.edu](mailto:kulrich@unm.edu)

Goddesses and Gods of India is a historical introduction to the major goddesses and gods of India and explores three questions: (1) Who are the goddesses and gods of India? (2) What are their relationships with each other, male and female human beings, and their social, historical, and religious contexts? and (3) How have ideas about and practices directed toward deities changed in India over the centuries?

In the course of exploring these questions, we will familiarize ourselves with the local, regional, and pan-Indian gods and goddesses, along with their history, mythology, religious practices (e.g., rituals), and art/iconography. Materials for this course are drawn from textual, historical, and ethnographic studies from the various regions and religions of India, from ca. 3000 BCE to the present; classes will be a combination of discussion, powerpoint lectures, and films. Most of the semester will focus on Hinduism, but we also will consider Indian Buddhist, Jain, Sikh, Zoroastrian, Jewish, Christian, and/or Islamic (Sufi) viewpoints and practices.

**RELG 347.002 – T: Spirit & Artificial Intelligence****Offered: MWF 1:00-1:50pm****Instructor:** Michael Candelaria, [mcandel@unm.edu](mailto:mcandel@unm.edu)

In this course, we are going to explore the challenges that AI poses to human spirituality, ethics, faith, and philosophy. This is not a technical course. Our focus will be on examining questions such as the following: Can the quest for AI tell us something about our concepts about God, creation, and ourselves? Could AI be an expression of the Imago Dei—the image of God? Is AI necessary because humans have declared the death of God? Can we have a meaningful relationship with a machine? Could large computer networks ‘wake up’ as superhuman intelligent agents? If AI could lead to the extinction of the human race should humans continue to develop it? Could we be resurrected by programs of our neural networks run by super computers? We will consider whether AI will transform religion. Could AI replace spiritual leaders and question our freewill? Not only will we survey relevant literature and film about the possibility of machine’s behaving maliciously, but also inquire about larger issues that concern AI’s challenge to our notions about truth and reality.

**RELG 347.005 – T: Catholicism in Latin America****Offered: TR 12:30-1:45pm****Instructor:** Staff

Description Forthcoming

**RELG 350.001 – Religion and Literature****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Kelly Van Andel, [kvanande@unm.edu](mailto:kvanande@unm.edu)

Religion and Literature explores the role that myths, stories, and literature play in religion and secular culture and society. Texts include excerpts from Genesis, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the *Upanishads* and the origin myths of the Navajos as well as the full texts of “Yellow Woman,” *Confessions of a Pagan Nun*, *Waiting for Godot*, *Dawn*, “White Tigers,” one book of the Harry Potter series, and Marvel films. There are weekly reading quizzes, learning surveys, and a final project.

**RELG 441.001 – Religion in American History****Offered: Full Term Online****Instructor:** Charles Becknell [cbeck@unm.edu](mailto:cbeck@unm.edu)

This course traces the history and development of religion in the United States from the 17th to 21st centuries and explores the many ways that it responded to and influenced North American culture and identity. Rather than depart from the traditional meta-narrative of the Anglo-Saxon Protestant majority, it uses the lenses of different religious traditions to view the diversity of our religious landscape while critically assessing the common heritage that is shared.