



RELIGIOUS  
STUDIES  
PROGRAM

## Spring 2024 Course Descriptions

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

**Offered:** TR 9:30-10:45 a.m.

**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 1110.002: Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered:** TR 11:00-12:15 p.m.

**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 1110.004: Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered:** Online

**Instructor:** William Barnes [whb100@unm.edu](mailto:whb100@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 Chinese religion & philosophy. After looking at these "Eastern" religions, we will examine the "Western" religious tradition, starting with Judaism, then Christianity, and finally Islam.

#### **Course Requirements**

6 on-line exams will be given for Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese religion, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Each will be worth 14% of the grade. You will have a 24-hour window within which you *must* complete the exam. Make-up exams must be authorized by me, and this will only happen with a very legitimate excuse.

### **RELG 1110.005: Introduction to World Religions**

**Offered:** Online (First Half)

**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 1550.001: Religion Health & Medicine****Offered: Online****Instructor:** Kelly Van Andel [kvandel@unme.edu](mailto:kvandel@unme.edu)

Religion, Health, and Medicine introduces you to 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), they will learn how religious beliefs and practices relate to rites of passage, sexuality, women's health, diet, mental health, trauma, and end of life issues. In addition to assessing your knowledge of the relationship between religion and perspectives on health and medical care and treatment, course assignments will raise your awareness of how people with different world views interact. Course requirements or activities also will teach you how to evaluate your 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: Online****Instructor:** Kelly Van Andel [kvanande@unm.edu](mailto:kvanande@unm.edu)

Religion, Health, and Medicine introduces you to 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), they will learn how religious beliefs and practices relate to rites of passage, sexuality, women's health, diet, mental health, trauma, and end of life issues. In addition to assessing your knowledge of the relationship between religion and perspectives on health and medical care and treatment, course assignments will raise your awareness of how people with different worldviews interact. Course requirements or activities also will teach you how to evaluate your 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 9:30-10:45 a.m.****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 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, Bön, Shamanism, and the folk, popular, or new religions of India, China, and Japan. Classes are mainly Powerpoint lectures, with occasional films, discussions, and group work on assignments.

## **RELG 2110 (006 & 008): Eastern Religions**

**Offered: Online (First Half)**

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

This course surveys 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 and 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: You can this book as a hardcopy through the UNM Bookstore. If you prefer an ebook, you can purchase directly with the following link:<https://www.mheducation.com/highered/custom/product/9781307698947.html>
- 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 (009 & 010): Eastern Religions**

**Offered: Online (Second Half)**

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

This course surveys 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 and 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 2120.003: Western Religions****Offered: 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. By the end of this class, students should have a firm grasp of the origins, development, fundamental ideas, beliefs, rituals and practices of these three religions, and develop a sense of what each of these religions mean for the people who practice them and live by them.

**RELG 2120.003: Western Religions****Offered: Online****Instructor:** Kelly Van Andel [kvanande@unm.edu](mailto:kvanande@unm.edu)

Western Religions provides an overview of the origins, development, major branches, and beliefs and practices of the three Abrahamic faiths: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It also considers the role that sacred texts and the interpretation of such play in the three religions. Assignments include weekly check-in and content quizzes, short reflections on course material and the novel *The Children of the Alley*, and a portfolio.

**RELG 314.004: Islamic Mysticism****Offered: MW 12:00-2:30 p.m. (Second Half)****Instructor:** Mozafar Banihashemi [mozafar@unm.edu](mailto:mozafar@unm.edu)

This course will introduce students to the mystical dimensions of the Islamic religious tradition, known as Sufism. The course will explore the nature, origins, and development of thoughts and practices of mystical Islam. In this connection, themes such as Sufism vis-à-vis Islamic orthodoxy, the mystical experience of Sufis, internal and external forms of knowledge, and the literary heritage of Sufism with an emphasis on Sufi poetry among many others will be reviewed. The course will also examine Sufi organizations and social practices in the contemporary world.

**RELG 332.001: Introduction to Buddhism****Offered: TR 11:00-12:15 p.m.****Instructor:** Katherine Ulrich [kulrich@unm.edu](mailto:kulrich@unm.edu)

Introduction to Buddhism is a historical survey of Buddhist practices, beliefs, institutions, and figures from the time of the historical Buddha through to the contemporary period. Approximately half the semester will focus on early and Theravada Buddhism through a close study of Buddhist scriptures from the Pali Canon and an examination of archaeological evidence from early India and Sri Lanka; the rest of the semester examines Mahayana and Tantric Buddhism in Tibet, China, Japan, South Korea, and Siberia. Readings include both primary sources in translation and scholarly literature; classes are a combination of PowerPoint lectures and discussion, with the occasional film.

**RELG 347.002: Catholic Saints in North America****Offered: TR 9:30-10:45 a.m.****Instructor:** Kathleen Holscher [kholscher@unm.edu](mailto:kholscher@unm.edu)

Saints—people who, after their deaths, are celebrated as special, powerful, and intercessory agents-- have been a part of Christian life for almost two millennia. When Spanish and French Catholics arrived in the “New World,” they brought saints with them. Since then, Catholics of

Indigenous, European, and African origins have developed devotions to saints that, while informed by European tradition, are also marked by opportunities and hardships of life in North America. This course takes saints, and communities that grow around them, as an entry point for exploring the history of North American Catholicism. Our focus is *not* the lives of saints, but rather their “afterlives”—ways their memories have been constructed by generations of Catholics, and ways the Church has mediated those memories, by granting-- or in some cases refusing-- them official recognition. The processes by which saints are made are politically charged, wrapped up with shifting currents in the Church, and shaped by “this worldly” events and ideologies. At the same time, “saint-making” remains personal, a matter of intimate relationships between the living and the dead. As such, saints shed light on public histories of Catholicism—especially the part the Church has played in European colonialism, and the ambitions of the U.S. nation-state—and they also speak to how the divine becomes “abundantly present” in the lives of people.

**RELG 347.003: T: Gender & The Bible**

**Offered: Online**

**Instructor:** Hilary Lipka [hlipka@unm.edu](mailto:hlipka@unm.edu)

Religion and Literature explores literatures and more generally myth’s relationship to and role in religion. More specifically, in a sweeping survey that follows the structure of Karen Armstrong’s book *A Short History of Myth*, it studies the historical contexts, forms, authorship, voices, and themes of religious literature and literature about religion from the Paleolithic Period to the present. Course material includes excerpts from the *Enuma Elish*, the *Upanishads*, and the origin myth of the Navajos as well as the full texts of “Yellow Woman,” *Confessions of a Pagan Nun*, *The Crucible*, *Waiting for Godot*, and *Dawn*, among others. Assignments include learning surveys, class discussions, a midterm and final exam, and a short presentation.

**RELG 347.004: T: African American Religions**

**Offered: Online (Second Half)**

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

Students in this course will explore diverse African and African Diasporic religious traditions and their relationship to one another. It also considers forms of Black worship and religiosity beyond easily identifiable “religions.” Through critical reading and concentrated writing on this topic, students will develop a critical awareness about the category of religion as it relates to Black life across the African Diaspora.

**RELG 441 001: Religion in American History**

**Offered: Online (Second Half)**

**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.

**RELG 452 001: Theories of Religion****Offered: TR 12:30-1:45****Instructor:** Daniel Wolne [dsw1@unm.edu](mailto:dsw1@unm.edu)

This course is designed to provide an examination and critique of some of the most influential 19th, 20th, and 21st century scientific attempts to explain religion. We will begin by examining the difference between supernaturalist and scientific theories of religion. Then, we will investigate some of the major theoreticians in this subject, by reading primary sources with brief introductions by Daniel Pals. We will also look at some contemporary accounts, examining postmodernist and evolutionary psychology's perspectives on religion. The goal of the class is to provide a forum where these ideas can be examined and critiqued, with an eye towards discovering how these theories might help shed some light upon (or obscure) the careful investigation of religious phenomena. Some background in comparative world religions (either RELG 1110 or equivalent) is essential for this course. At the close of the course, we will evaluate the lessons learned, and finish by considering what it might mean to construct our own "mega-theory" of religion, or (possibly) conclude that all of our theorizing is doomed to be impossible/inaccurate, and slink off in intellectual disarray!