## Fall 2008 Religious Studies Course Descriptions

### RELST 2250  
**Introduction to Asian Religions**  
3 Credits  

Boucher, D.  
MW 2:30-3:20  
Crosslisted with Asian 2250  
Grading Option: Letter  

*Explores religious traditions in South Asia (Pakistan, India, and Sri Lanka) and East Asia (China and Japan) including Hinduism, Buddhism (South Asian and East Asian), Sikhism, Confucianism, Daoism, and Shinto. Encounters a wide range of religious expressions as well, including myth, ritual, pilgrimage, mysticism, meditation, and other spiritual technologies.*

**Sub Courses:**  
- **Section 1**  
  R 2:30-3:20  
  Staff  
- **Section 2**  
  R 3:35-4:25  
  Staff  
- **Section 3**  
  F 10:10-11:00  
  Staff  
- **Section 4**  
  F 11:15-12:05  
  Staff  
- **Section 5**  
  F 12:20-1:10  
  Staff  
- **Section 6**  
  F 1:25-2:15  
  Staff

### RELST 2420  
**Religion and Politics in American History**  
4 Credits  

Moore, L.  
MW 2:55-4:10  
Crosslisted with HIST 2420, AMST 2420  
Grading Option: Letter or S/U  

Limited to 15 students. Permission of instructor required.

### RELST 2655  
**Intro into Islamic Civilization**  
3 Credits  

Powers, D.  
MW 11:15-12:05  
Crosslisted with NES 2655, HIST 2530  
Grading Option: Letter or S/U  

*We consider the major themes of Islamic civilization as they developed from the lifetime of Muhammad until the twentieth century. While the readings provide the student with the chronology of Islamic history, lectures are devoted to an analysis of thematic units, such as art and architecture, science, and cities. The class meets three times weekly, and the classroom format is that of a lecture/discussion in which students are encouraged to participate actively. Lectures are accompanied by slide presentations when appropriate.*

**Discussions:**  
- **Disc 201**  
  F 11:15-12:05  
  Staff  
- **Disc 202**  
  F 12:20-1:10  
  Staff  
- **Disc 203**  
  F 11:15-12:05  
  Staff  
- **Disc 204**  
  F 12:20-1:10  
  Staff

7/17/2008
RELST 2662  Daily Life in the Biblical World  3 Credits
Zorn, J  TR 11:40-12:55
Crosslisted with NES 2662, ARKEO 2662, JWST 2662, LA 2520
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

The course will survey the common and not-so-common daily activities of the world of ancient Israel and its neighbors in Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan. Many courses cover aspects of ancient political history or ancient literature, but these often focus on the activities of members of social elites, at the expense of the activities of more average citizens. The focus of this class is on ancient technologies and human interactions with the environment. It will provide a broad spectrum, spanning all social classes, and many different kinds of resources and activities. Material to be covered will include topics such as food production and processing, pottery production, metallurgy, glass making, cloth production and personal adornment, implements of war, medicine, leisure time (games and music), and others.

RELST 2724  Introduction to the Hebrew Bible  3 Credits
Jovanovic, L  MWF 12:20-1:10
Crosslisted with NES 2724, JWST 2724
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

Though many recognize the centrality of the Tanakh/ Old Testament/Hebrew Bible in Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, and its impact on world civilization, Voltaire’s observation, made some three centuries ago, that the Bible is "more celebrated than known" has lost none of its validity. This course is an enterprise in bridging this gap through the careful reading of the biblical literature and the use of academic tools so that students develop the skills for reading and interpreting biblical texts in the light of modern approaches. The writings will be contextualized from their ancient Near Eastern setting to their later appropriation by Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Finally, through writing and projects, students will have an opportunity to examine current interpretations of the Hebrew Bible in art, music, literature, film, sport, politics, popular culture, academic discussions, or public controversies, and reflect on how these ancient texts still influence us in the digital age. Because of the shortage of time to entertain topics of limitless potential we will need to be highly selective.

RELST 3351  Indian Religious Worlds  4 Credits
Gold, D  TR 11:40-12:55
Crosslisted with ASIAN 3351
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

A study of religious traditions as lived today in the Indian subcontinent. Attention will be paid to differences in piety and practice within alternative environments.

RELST 3460  Modernization of the American Mind  4 Credits
Moore, L  TR 11:15-12:05
Crosslisted with HIST 3460, AMST 3460
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

American thought and culture from 1890 to the present. Emphasizes the intellectual impact of major political and economic events and the adaptation of social ideas and values to new conditions. (AM) Crosslisted with Hist 3460 and AmST 3460.

7/17/2008
Discussions:
Disc 201  F  11:15-12:05  Staff
Disc 202  R  1:25-2:15  Staff

RELST 3619  Christianities of the Near East 50-650ce  4 Credits
Haines-Eitzen, K  TR  10:10-11:25
Crosslisted with NES 3619, JWST 3619, HIST 3619
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

This course treats the history of Christianity from 50-650 C.E. (i.e., from Paul to the emergence of Islam), with a particular focus on the varieties of Christianity that emerged in the Eastern Mediterranean, Near Eastern, and North African regions during this time period. After surveying what we can learn about the spread of Christian practices and beliefs in the earliest centuries, we will turn to exploring various "heretical" movements (e.g., Montanism, Gnosticism, Marcionism, Nestorianism) and look closely at how and why the culture and society of different regions (e.g., Asia Minor/Turkey, Armenia, Syria, Mesopotamia/Iraq, Persia/Iran, Palestine, Egypt, Ethiopia) contributed to diverse manifestations of Christianity. Along the way, we will also consider gender and asceticism, the production and dissemination of Christian literature, and the interface between Christianity and Judaism as well as Christianity and Islam.

RELST 4460  Indian Meditation Texts  4 Credits
Gold, D  R  2:30-4:25
Crosslisted with ASIAN 4460
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

Draws on approaches from literary criticism, anthropology, and religious studies to explore texts that record religious experience.

RELST 4462  Religion, Colonialism and Nationalism  4 Credits
Blackburn, A  TR  2:55-4:10 (Sem 101)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 4462
Grading Option: Letter Only

Prerequisites: one course in ASIAN, RELST, HIST, ANTHR at 300 level or above or permission of instructor.

RELST 4639  Readings in Islamic Historical Texts  4 Credits
Powers, D  MW 2:55-4:10 (Sem)
Crosslisted with NES 4639
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

This class will introduce students to Arabic historical texts. The topic for this year's seminar will be the Arab conquests. Review of grammar, syntax, and vocabulary. Prerequisite: Reading knowledge of Arabic.

RELST 4787  Hellenistic Jewish Literature  4 Credits
Jovanovic, L  R  1:25-4:25
Crosslisted with NES4787, JWST 4787, CLASS 4605
Grading Option: Letter only
Apart from translating the Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, Hellenistic Judaism was prolific in its production of other literature in Greek as well. Romances, philosophical treatises, and biblical stories grace this rich and diverse corpus. In this seminar, we will read, in English translation, from a selection of such texts, including the Letter of Aristeas, Joseph and Aseneth, Josephus' Antiquities, LXX, The Testament of 12 Patriarchs, the works of Philo and Atrapanus, among others. We will explore how these texts discourse both with the ancestral biblical material and their adopted Greek culture by examining their interpretations of biblical figures and events, by situating the texts in their cultural contexts, and by applying the methodologies of modern scholarship. Particular attention will be devoted to individual topics, such as the concern for Jewish self-definition, monotheistic faith, gender dynamics, political convictions, and artistic expression.

An optional third hour will be devoted to reading from the texts in the original language and discussing their linguistic and textual problems. We will look at the idiosyncrasies of the Greek of the LXX and explore its use in different genres of Hellenistic Jewish literature. At least a year of ancient Greek is required for this section of the course.

**RELST 4821 Religious and Secular in American Culture 4 Credits**
Moore, L T 2:30-4:25 Crosslisted with HIST 4821, AMST 4821 Grading Option: Letter or S/U

This course probes American intellectual and cultural history by discounting a sharp division between what is secular and what is religious. In the United States the categories secular and religious have always interacted, allowing non-Americans to see Americans as at once the most religious of all people and the most conscious of worldly, practical matters. The readings and the writing assignments are aimed at rethinking classic debates, for example the role of religion in politics, the conflict between science and religion, and the alleged difference between religious and humanistic morality. The effort is not to convince students that Americans are unique in blending secular and religious but that key aspects of American history (the early separation of church and state, the importance of immigration and of non-European populations, the elaborate attempt to define American democracy as a moral system) have kept religion, and not just white Protestant evangelicalism, at the center of American culture.

**RELST 4990 Directed Study 1-4 Credits**
TBA

For majors in Religious Studies; permission of director required

**RELST 4995 Senior Honors Essay 1-8 Credits**
TBA

Required for Honors in Religious Studies. Permission of Instructor required.

**RELST 6020 Latin Philosophical Texts 4 Credits**
Staff TBA Crosslisted with PHIL 6020, LATN 7262 Grading Option: Letter or S/U

Fall and spring. Variable credit. Prerequisites: Knowledge of Latin and permission of instructor. Staff. Reading and Translation of Latin philosophical texts.
RELST 6653  Buddhist Narrative Literature  4 Credits
Boucher, D  TBA
Crosslisted with Asian 6653
Grading Option: Letter only

Prerequisite: Students must have reading knowledge of either Chinese or Sanskrit. This course will examine a body of related genres of Buddhist narrative literature known as jataka and avadana. These early post-Asokan texts represent a significant development in the construction of the biography of the Buddha and other Buddhist saints, developments which manifested themselves in both literature and art during this period. This seminar is designed to help explore these genres in the primary languages (Sanskrit or Chinese) while also drawing attention to the scholarship on them.

RELST 7633  Gender and Late Antiquity  4 Credits
Haines-Eitzen, K  T  1:25-4:25
Bowles, K
Crosslisted with CLASS 7633, FGSS 7630, HIST 7633, NES 7633
Grading Option: Letter or S/U

This seminar treats gender, broadly construed to include masculinity, femininity and sexuality – from approximately 100-500 A.D. Of particular interest will be the multiple intersections between gender and late ancient economics, religion, politics, art and archaeology. The seminar will use relevant theoretical works and secondary sources to read ancient texts (hagiography, documentary papyri, ecclesiastical letters, inscriptions) and material culture (art, architecture and other artifactual material).