

# RELIGIOUS STUDIES

## *Lower Division*

### **RS 1108 Jesus, Buddha, and the Moral Life (3)**

This course studies the ethical thought of Jesus and Buddha. Based on the teachings found in the Christian New Testament and the Buddhist sutras, the ethics of Jesus and Buddha will be examined for their meaning within their respective religious world-views and the modern world; the teaching of Jesus and Buddha in relationship to contemporary moral theory, particularly virtue ethics; moral courage and leadership; and the application of the teachings of Buddha and Jesus to contemporary cases in ethical reasoning such as poverty, environmentalism, healthcare, sexuality, race and gender, altruism, forgiveness, and globalization. Satisfies general education Sustainability and Justice. Satisfies general education requirement Area C2.

### **RS 1118 Religion and Film: Screening the Sacred (1)**

This course offers students the opportunity to study religion through the genre of film. Religion reflects humanity's search for meaning and its attempts to maintain particular meanings in the face of cultural challenge and social pressure. In this course, we will use a number of films to examine some of the ways in which these processes occur. Using a wide variety of examples, we will learn how religion, whether explicitly or implicitly, has been a central inspiration for filmmakers, as well as how these films have often been a central concern for religious adherents. Satisfies general education requirement Area C2.

### **RS 1128 A History of God (3)**

This course studies the three monotheisms: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. It focuses on each religion individually and comparatively. The course especially emphasizes context (social, cultural, historical, religious) and history (development over time), but also includes such topics as respective religious world-views, morals and ethics, and practice and spirituality. It considers each religion in both its historical and modern contexts. Satisfies general education requirement Area C2.

### **RS 1138 Religions of Asia (3)**

This course introduces students to the field of religious studies and some of the great religious traditions of Asia. We will investigate how select sacred texts and practices in India, Thailand, Japan and China have advocated for lives of meaning and purpose and promoted diverse visions of human flourishing. Satisfies general education requirement Area C2.

### **RS 2010 Cults in America (3)**

Freedom of religion in the United States has inspired an ongoing and passionate creation of new religious movements. This course explores spiritual creativity and the development of new religious movements from the first colonies in New England to contemporary cults, from the Mormons and the Shakers to Scientology and the Branch Davidians. Students examine the concepts of religion, spirituality, new religious movements and cults; freedom of religion; New Age and neo-

Pagan spirituality; UFO, science fiction and suicide cults; mainstream assimilation of new religious movements; cultural and political concerns and cult behavior; and counter-cult and anti-cult groups.

## *Upper Division*

### **RS 3208 Explorations in Scripture (3)**

This course studies the scriptures of major world religions through the lens of themes such as social justice, forgiveness, and compassion. The course especially emphasizes context (social, cultural, historical, religious) and history (development over time), but also emphasizes respective religious world-views and comparative religion. It considers each religion's sacred text in both its historical and modern contexts. Satisfies general education Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations upper division Area C.

### **RS 3210 Judaism (3)**

A study of the multiple histories, texts, and practices that shape and sustain Jewish civilization with particular attention to the classical rabbinic tradition and post-Enlightenment expressions of Jewish identity. Students will learn about central theological concepts, the cycle of Jewish holy days, life cycle events, and some of the variations in Judaism throughout the ages and today. Visits to local congregations will be included.

### **RS 3220 Christianity (3)**

This course studies the history and literature of the Christian tradition from its beginnings as a small group within Judaism and may include its transformation into Orthodox, Roman Catholic, Anglican, and Protestant branches. The course especially emphasizes context (social, cultural, historical, religious) and history (development over time), but also includes such topics as morals and ethics, practice, and spirituality. It considers Christianity in both its historical and modern contexts.

### **RS 3230 Islam (3)**

This course studies the history, literature, religion, governments, and culture of Islam and Islamic civilization from its beginnings in the Arabian desert to its spread throughout Asia, Africa, and the Western world. The major topics we will cover are: Islamic Origins; The Quran (Koran) and Hadith (Islamic traditions), especially the former; the Formation of the Islamic Tradition; Islamic Institutions; Jihad (Struggle); Crisis and Renewal in Islamic History; Women in Islam; Progressive Islam; and Reimagining Islam in the Twenty-first Century.

### **RS 3240 Hinduism (3)**

A study of India's culture, especially religious, mythical, and artistic expressions; the values and living patterns of citizens; the historical events leading up to independence from Great Britain; and the social, economic and spiritual effects of independence.

**RS 3250 Introduction to Buddhism (3)**

An introduction to the historical and thematic expression of Buddhist beliefs and practices from the time of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha, to the present. Through the study of primary and secondary sources, we will explore the rich history of Buddhism as it has shaped, and been shaped by, its spread from India throughout Asia and the West. We will explore the Three Jewels the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha and how they each provide refuge for those suffering in samsara (endless rebirth). We will engage in close readings of the literary and philosophical texts central to Buddhism. In addition, a central means of our access into this tradition is writings by several contemporary Buddhists who bring to our study an additional level of immediacy and concreteness.

**RS 3260 Native American Religion (3)**

This course will study the rich and diverse religious life of Native Americans from the remote past to the present with primary focus on North American cultures. Issues relevant to gender, ritual practice, moral values, sacred stories and world views will be examined. Native and non-native sources will be studied.

**RS 3340 Psychology of Religion (3)**

This course studies the interaction of psychology, religion, and spirituality. Attention is given to various psychological theories of religion including those of James, Freud, Jung, Epstein, and Zimbardo. Topics include the psychology of religious experience, the problem of evil, mindfulness, altruism, forgiveness, eating disorders, cognitive science, and the evolutionary psychology of religion. Cross-listed with Psychology.

**RS 3350 Sociology of Religion (3)**

This course examines the roles of religion in society. It analyzes the complex relationships between religion and social change, including the influence that religion has on society and, in turn, the effects that social structure and culture have on religion. Different dimensions of religion will be explored, such as beliefs and values, attendance, religious identification, and participation in rituals. It highlights the relationship between religion, culture, community, and family, and special attention will be given to the functions of religion in contemporary secular and secularizing societies. The course also focuses on religious diversity and issues of discrimination and inequality.

**RS 3368 Women, Religion and Sexuality (3)**

A critical examination of the various ways major religious traditions, Western and Asian, represent and legislate women and sexuality in their literatures and institutions in diverse historical contexts. Using a range of methodologies, with particular emphasis on feminist critique, the course also examines the nature of women's participation and leadership in these traditions as it shaped by factors of race, class and

sexual orientation, as well as religious choices made by "post" Jewish and Christian women. Satisfies general education requirement JYDR.

**RS 3480 Applied Experience (3)**

Applied experiences will vary depending on placement availability and student interest. This course provides supervised field experience and the opportunity to apply knowledge and skills obtained through religious studies and general education coursework in situations with groups and individuals in community organizations and institutions. Career-oriented experience in a community setting on or off campus is combined with academic activities in a college setting. This is a credit/no credit course.

**RS 3518 The American Dream (3)**

A study of the revolutionary idea of the American Dream that will explore the many ways in which American culture has been claimed as unprecedented in world history, the ways such efforts have been realized or failed, and the irony of the American Dream found in the oppression of marginalized peoples. Among course topics are the revolutionary impact of early American life and culture; the international revolution of human rights and freedom from the monarchs of Europe and the establishment of religion arising from the American Dream's encapsulation of the pursuit of happiness, religious freedom, and equal opportunity for all. The course will explore the irony of the American dream for marginalized Americans who have created innovative movements for human rights, equal opportunity, and a more perfect union in America that has reimagined how the American Dream can revolutionize twenty-first century life. Satisfies general education Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations upper division Area C.

**RS 3528 The Holocaust and Its Impact (3)**

This course examines the Holocaust through the study of a wide range of primary and secondary sources. Topics central to the course include the rise of Nazi Germany; the problem of Holocaust representation and memory; the relationship between anti-Judaism and antisemitism; the experiences of survivors, perpetrators, bystanders, and rescuers; Jewish and German resistance to the Holocaust; ethics and the Holocaust; and the persistence of genocide and antisemitism in the twenty-first century. Satisfies general education Sustainability and Justice upper division Area C.

**RS 3538 Religion and Human Rights (3)**

This course studies the development of the revolutionary ideas of civil disobedience and human rights in relation to religious violence and non-violence. Employing primary texts and scholarly sources from religious studies, the social sciences, and history, the course studies Mahatma Gandhi's philosophy of satyagraha and Indian independence; Martin Luther King, Jr.'s philosophy of non-violent resistance and the civil rights movement in the USA; the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa; the Mothers on the Plaza protesting Argentina's Dirty War; religious myth and sexual

## RELIGIOUS STUDIES

violence in the Bosnian genocide; the UN and the Rwandan genocide; religious violence and 9/11; and peacemaking in relation to terrorism. Satisfies general education Revolutionary Ideas and Innovations upper division Area C.

### **RS 3548 The Spiritual Quest (3)**

This course studies the lives of persons who have undertaken a spiritual quest in pursuit of self-knowledge and insight into the meaning of life and happiness. The course investigates spirituality and its relationship to individual struggle, the creative imagination, and personal reflection. Guiding themes include self-knowledge and personal and social transformation; the portrayal of the spiritual quest in diverse genres and religious traditions; the example of spiritual autobiography; and the relationship between the spiritual quest and knowledge of God or ultimate reality. The course addresses the struggle for meaning and the personal experiences of historical and contemporary figures to study the various ways that people have discovered and defined happiness and meaning. Satisfies general education Quality of Life and upper division Area C.

### **RS 3770 Special Topics (1-3)**

Topics to be offered will be announced prior to registration. May be repeated for different course content.

### **RS 4518 The Meaning of Death (3)**

A study of the meaning of death in the major religious traditions of the world through investigation of their end-of-life and mourning rituals and afterlife beliefs. Additional topics may include hospice, advance directives, near death experiences, grief and loss, physician-assisted suicide, death penalty and genocide. Satisfies general education Sustainability and Justice upper division Area C.

### **RS 4528 Religion, Ethics, and Social Justice (3)**

A comparative examination of the various ways in which major world religious traditions construct worldviews that prescribe ethical theory and action in diverse historical contexts. Employing methodology in comparative studies in religion, the course examines the application of ethics and ethical leadership to issues such as poverty, war and peace, imperialism and colonialism, forgiveness, sexuality, environmentalism, religious fundamentalism, and religious pluralism. Prerequisites: JYDR and junior status or higher. Satisfies general education Sustainability and Justice upper division Area C.

### **RS 4770 Special Topics (1-3)**

Topics to be offered will be announced prior to registration. May be repeated for different course content.

### **RS 4850 Individual Study (1-3)**

Individual program with regular consultations and/or examinations as instructor may require. Admission with consent of department chair.

### **RS 4860 Internship (1-3)**

Supervised field experience in applying religious studies skills in dealing with individuals and in community organizations and institutions, including CSUB. Career-oriented experience in community setting is combined with academic activities in the college setting. Hours in the field, placement and academic requirements such as conferences, reports, and readings are arranged in consultation with the work supervisor and faculty supervisor. Prerequisites vary depending on the specific internship, but enrollment is limited to students with good academic records who are committed to understanding the religious elements present in professional life.

### **RS 4880 Directed Study in the Instruction of PHIL/RS (1-3)**

Theory and method in undergraduate instruction in Philosophy/Religious Studies. Weekly meetings with faculty sponsor and supervised experience which may include developing and administering examinations or paper assignments, proctoring self-paced instructional units, course development, evaluation of student papers, lectures, leading class discussion and discussion groups, and in-depth directed readings of relevant topics. The course is repeatable and will be offered on a credit, no credit basis only. Prerequisites: Senior (or graduate) standing and consent of the instructor who will serve as sponsor.

### **RS 4900 Senior Seminar (4)**

Seniors in the major or minor will carry out extended research and write a final essay that serves as the culmination of their study for the degree.

### *Graduate Courses*

### **RS 5100 Advanced Research Participation (1-3)**

Individual investigation under the supervision of an identified instructor. (Experience as a research or teaching assistant does not count for credit.) Prerequisite: 3.0 GPA and consent of department chair.

### **RS 5770 Advanced Topics in Religious Studies (1-3)**

Topics to be offered will be announced. May be repeated for different course content. Requires graduate level standing.

### **RS 5990 Advanced Individual Study (1-3)**

Special projects developed by the individual in consultation with an identified instructor. Prerequisite: 3.0 GPA and consent of department chair.

### **RS 6770 Advanced Topics in Religious Studies (1-3)**

Topics to be offered will be announced. May be repeated for different course content. Requires graduate level standing.