RELIGIOUS STUDIES

Faculty

David V. Fiordalis, Ph.D.

Jennifer J. Williams, Ph.D.

The academic study of religion at Linfield University embodies the core values of a comprehensive, liberal arts education. It does not espouse any particular religious perspective, but rather seeks to understand religion in its manifold dimensions. Since our field of inquiry touches upon many different aspects of human existence, we necessarily combine many different methods of analysis, drawn from numerous academic disciplines in the humanities and social sciences, including history, language, art, literature, philosophy, anthropology, psychology, and cultural studies. What sets our field apart is our sustained focus on religion as an historical and cultural phenomenon, or complex of phenomena, worthy of specific analysis. Our courses serve as a platform for students to think carefully and critically about religion, and then go beyond the classroom to test what they have learned through firsthand experiences of cultural and religious diversity, both locally and around the world. In this way, students can learn to reflect in both critical and constructive ways upon their own ideas, beliefs and practices in a rigorous, supportive and respectful environment.

Programs

- Religious Studies Major (http://catalog.linfield.edu/programs-az/arts-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-major/)
- Religious Studies Minor (http://catalog.linfield.edu/programs-az/arts-sciences/religious-studies/religious-studies-minor/)

Courses

A list of the department's infrequently taught courses can be found on the Registrar's webpages.

RELS 110 APPROACHES TO RELIGION (4 credits)
Introductory course in the academic study of religion. Required for majors and minors.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 111 JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY & ISLAM (4 credits)
Introduction to the academic study of the three main Abrahamic religions. Themes include historical and contemporary interrelations among Muslims, Christians and Jews; their core beliefs and practices; sacred literature; gender and the body.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 115 RELIGIOUS ETHICS (4 credits)
Formation and meaning of religious ethics in contemporary life. Human responsibility, community, racism, sexism, violence, war.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, U.S. PLURALISM)

RELS 120 OLD TESTAMENT (4 credits)
Literature of the Old Testament: its form, content, historical development, and interpretation.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 130 NEW TESTAMENT (4 credits)
Literature of the New Testament: its form, content, historical development, and interpretation.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 140 THE HOLY QUR'AN (4 credits)
Literature of the Qur'an: its form, content, historical development, and interpretation. Course designed especially for students with some familiarity with Old and New testament narrative. Provides students an opportunity for further study of the major world faith that is Islam.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 160 PHILOSOPHY EAST & WEST (ALSO LISTED AS PHIL 160) (4 credits)
Comparative introductory study of major philosophical traditions of east and west: ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of religion.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 198 SPECIAL TOPICS: JAN TERM TRAV (4 credits)
Topics vary according to faculty availability and interest. Past topics have included Old Testament in Israel; New Testament in Israel and Jordan; New Testament in Rome. Offered only as student interest and university resources permit. May be repeated for credit with different topics.
Prerequisites: IDST 098 previous fall.
Typically offered: January Term

RELS 202 HEBREW I (4 credits)
Elements of Hebrew grammar. Language tapes and class exercises to give the student experience in spoken, elementary, Modern Hebrew; readings from prose sections of the Hebrew Bible. With RELS 203, meets the language requirement for the B.A.

RELS 203 HEBREW II: READINGS IN BIBLE (4 credits)
Selected passages from the prose and poetry of the Hebrew Bible.
Prerequisites: RELS 202.

RELS 204 SANSKRIT I (4 credits)
Introduction to Sanskrit language: Reading, writing, pronunciation basic grammar. Fulfills BA language requirement when completed with RELS 205.
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor.

RELS 205 SANSKRIT II (4 credits)
Continuation of first-year Sanskrit. Continued study of basic grammar necessary to begin reading Sanskrit literature. Fulfills BA language requirement when completed with RELS 204.
Prerequisites: RELS 204 or consent of instructor.

RELS 207 JEWISH-MUSLIM RELATIONS IN MODERN EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN (ALSO LISTED AS HIST 207) (4 credits)
Explores the history of relations between Jews and Muslims in Europe and the Mediterranean. Emphasis on the complex ties that evolved between them-cultural, commercial, intimate, political, etc.- through the experience of empire, world wars, Holocaust, Zionism, Arab nationalism, decolonization, and the Israel/ Palestine conflict. Course also considers the contemporary state of Jewish-Muslim relations.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, VITAL PAST)

RELS 215 INTRODUCTION TO YOGA (ALSO LISTED AS HHPA 215) (2 credits)
Overview of philosophy, history and practice of yoga; discussion of its progression and incorporation in the west over last 100 years; emphasis on benefits of yoga and mindfulness for the individual. Lecture. OFFERED THROUGH ONLINE AND CONTINUING EDUCATION (OCE) ONLY.
Prerequisites: HHPA 071A, or instructor consent.

RELS 218 BUDDHISM (4 credits)
Selective introduction to prominent Buddhist traditions of Asia and contemporary West. Introduction to basic Buddhist doctrines, practices, institutions and material culture. Analysis of Buddhist sacred literature with attention to historical context and contemporary lived realities.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 220 CHRISTIANITY (4 credits)
Prominent people, movements, and doctrines within Christianity. Special attention to primary source materials and biographies.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 230 RELIGIOUS THINKERS (4 credits)
Exposition of contemporary theologians through primary reading sources.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 298 SPECIAL TOPICS: JAN TERM TRAV (4 credits)
Topics vary according to faculty availability and interest. Past topics have included Old Testament in Israel; New Testament in Israel and Jordan; New Testament in Rome. Offered only as student interest and university resources permit. May be repeated for credit with different topics.See specific sections for descriptions.
Typically offered: January Term

RELS 306 RELIGION AND NATURE (ALSO LISTED AS ENVS 309) (4 credits)
Examination of how people have conceived the relationship between humanity and the natural world, and how people have found religion in nature. Topics include historical, ethical, and philosophical questions, as well as contemporary environmental and ecological concerns. Selections may be drawn from Asian religions (Buddhist, Hindu, Daoist, Shinto, etc.), Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam), indigenous (native American, African) traditions, or other traditional or non-traditional selections. Opportunities for experiential learning and for students to articulate and evaluate their own perspectives.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 309 OLD TESTAMENT PROPHETS (4 credits)
Historical and critical analysis of selected Old Testament Prophetic literature, focusing on form, content, historical development and interpretation. May focus on a single Prophet, like Isaiah, or introduce several Prophets. Special attention to primary source materials.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 310 HISTORY OF RELIGION OF THE MIDDLE EAST (ALSO LISTED AS HIST 310) (4 credits)
Prominent periods and events in the formation and development of the three major religious traditions of the Middle East: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Historical context, the prophet, conquest and empire, crisis and disaster, Holy Text.
Prerequisites: Sophomore standing or higher.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 315 POLITICS AND RELIGION (ALSO LISTED AS POLS 315) (4 credits)
Examination of the relationship between politics and religion in varying contexts: theories of the role of religion in government and society, religious social movements, contemporary political controversies involving religion.
Prerequisites: One of POLS 201, POLS 210, POLS 220, RELS 110, RELS 115, or consent of instructor.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 320 PILGRIMAGES: SACRED JOURNEYS (4 credits)
A study of the role and practices of pilgrimages in major religious traditions. Exploration of symbolic pilgrimages including the use of labyrinths. Relevance for personal practice and sacred journeys.
(GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 325 FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION (4 credits)
A study of the theology, role and practices of forgiveness in four major religious traditions: Buddhism, Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Includes examination of forgiveness, revenge, reconciliation and restorative justice. Case studies will focus on individuals, group/cultures, and national contexts. Relevance for personal practice will be explored.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 330 HISTORY OF RELIGION IN THE UNITED STATES (ALSO LISTED AS HIST 330) (4 credits)
History of prominent religious experiences in America. Protestant empire, Native American presence, minority appropriation, post-Christian responses.
Prerequisites: Sophomore standing or above.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, U.S. PLURALISM, VITAL PAST)

RELS 342 WOMEN IN RELIGION (ALSO LISTED AS GENS 342) (4 credits)
Examination of the depictions of women and roles that women play in selected religious traditions. May focus on the depiction of women in a religious tradition's sacred literature or the practices and roles of women in particular historical or contemporary religious contexts. Special attention to primary source materials.
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 360 DEAD SEA SCROLLS (4 credits)
The discovery, content, and historical context of the Dead Sea Scrolls. What the Scrolls tell us about Second Temple Judaism, the origins of Christianity, the history of the biblical text, the Qumran community. Making the scrolls available to the general public. Not open to those who have taken INQS 125 "The Dead Sea Scrolls."
(ULTIMATE QUESTIONS, VITAL PAST)

RELS 373 BUDDHIST LITERATURE (4 credits)
Reading Buddhist texts as literature; understanding the nature, purposes, and forms of Buddhist literature; Buddhist narrative genres; Buddhist past-life stories; Buddhist miracle tales; traditional and modern Buddhist poetry; Buddhist literature and philosophy. Specific textual focus may vary from semester to semester. Topics may include narrative and identity; gender dynamics in Buddhist literature; narrative and ritual performance; narrative and practices of self-cultivation.
(CREATIVE STUDIES, GLOBAL PLURALISM, ULTIMATE QUESTIONS)

RELS 398 SPECIAL TOPICS: JAN TERM TRAV (4 credits)
Topics vary according to faculty availability and interest. Past topics have included Old Testament in Israel; New Testament in Israel and Jordan; New Testament in Rome. Offered only as student interest and university resources permit. May be repeated for credit with different topics.
Prerequisites: IDST 098 previous fall.
Typically offered: January Term

RELS 439 PEER INSTRUCTION: RELIGIOUS STUDIES (1-4 credits)
Advanced opportunity for outstanding students to assist faculty members in the classroom. Normally the student will function as a tutor in a language course or introductory content course. Focus on course content and pedagogy.
Prerequisites: Application and consent of instructor.
(EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING)

RELS 480 INDEPENDENT STUDY (1-5 credits)
Independent study for students of advanced standing under the supervision of departmental faculty.
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor.

RELS 485 SENIOR SEMINAR (4 credits)
First course of departmental capstone sequence. Examination of academic approaches to the understanding of religious phenomena. Focus on theories and methods of analysis. Leads to completion of a proposal for the senior thesis.
Prerequisites: Consent of department.

RELS 487 INTERNSHIP (4 credits)
Individualized learning in applied religion through working in a church, synagogue, temple, or other institution related to a denomination or ecumenical group. Letter grades.
Prerequisites: Consent of department.
(EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING)

RELS 490 SENIOR THESIS (4 credits)
Second course of departmental capstone sequence. Advanced research and writing in consultation with one or more members of the department.
Prerequisites: RELS 485 and senior standing.
(MAJOR WRITING INTENSIVE)

RELS 498 SPECIAL TOPICS: JAN TERM TRAV (4 credits)
Topics vary according to faculty availability and interest. Past topics have included Old Testament in Israel; New Testament in Israel and Jordan; New Testament in Rome. Offered only as student interest and university resources permit. May be repeated for credit with different topics.
Prerequisites: IDST 098 previous fall.
Typically offered: January Term