

CRN#**Fall 2020 Religious Studies Cornerstone Course Descriptions**

- 20512 RST 100-A, HON COR: Gods, Myths, and Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean 3 credits (Honors)**
Prof. N. DesRosiers
 This class investigates the diverse religions of the ancient Mediterranean world (ca. 600 BCE-400CE), including Greek and Roman religions, formative Judaism, and the earliest Christianity. The course explores the history and development of these traditions by examining topics related to issues of ritual, myth, sacred space, gender, and concepts of divinity within each group. Particular focus is placed on the ways in which these groups influenced one another and reshaped cultural and religious landscapes through competitive interaction. Through a critical analysis of the sources students will begin to understand the practices, beliefs, and experiences of the Greco-Roman world and the communities that produced them.
- Only open to Honors Scholars that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20513 RST 100-B, COR: God Doesn't Do Religion 3 credits**
20514 RST 100-C, COR: God Doesn't Do Religion 3 credits
Prof. M. Leith
 We tend to think that religion is all about God, but why? And if God "doesn't do religion," who does? What do we even mean by "religion" in these questions? This course will inquire into the "building blocks" of religion and human religiousness, considering the practices of Jews, Christians and Muslims from an anthropological and historical perspective.
- Only open to students that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20515 RST 100-D, COR: Religions of the World 3 credits**
Prof. R. Gribble, CSC
 This course will examine the way religion has been studied as an academic discipline. We will explore both Eastern and Western religious traditions in their historical contexts and will focus primarily on how various religious concepts are understood and practiced in these major world religions. These will include the concepts of the Holy, revelation, sacred writings, good and evil, forgiveness, creation, the human condition, salvation, and ethics. In our study of religions we will explore a variety of practices in different historical contexts but common ground will be sought to illustrate how the sacred texts of each religious tradition define and illustrate how and why these groups practice the above mentioned concepts.
- Only open to students that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20516 RST 100-E, COR: Pilgrimage in Nature 3 credits**
20517 RST 100-F, COR: Pilgrimage in Nature 3 credits
Prof. C. Ives
 Stories in scriptures and the experiences of pilgrims remind us that religious life does not always take place indoors. Much of human religious experience occurs outside, in nature. We will explore this dimension of human religiosity through examination of Christian, Islamic, and Buddhist pilgrimages to such places as Lourdes, Mecca, and northern India, as well as the broader themes of nature symbolism and nature mysticism.
- Only open to students that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20518 RST 100-G, COR: Religion as Pharmakon: Poison or Cure 3 credits**
20519 RST 100-H, COR: Religion as Pharmakon: Poison or Cure 3 credits
Prof. G. Shaw
 For the ancient Greeks *pharmakon* meant both cure and poison depending on the context. Religion functions in the same way: it can heal us but can also poison us. We will explore the ambiguity and the power-both healing and destructive-of religious traditions.
- Only open to students that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20520 RST 100-I, COR: Pilgrimage and Passage: Religion as "Sacred" Journey 3 credits**
20521 RST 100-J, COR: Pilgrimage and Passage: Religion as "Sacred" Journey 3 credits
Prof. S. Wilbricht, CSC
 The course begins with the premise that all religions are at their best when they are "betwixt and between," living in the threshold, open to new and unexpected horizons. After a close reading of the Book of Exodus, which will provide the opportunity to identify various themes associated with ritual passage, we will concentrate primarily on the study of the three chief monotheistic religions of Semitic origin: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The course will end with a brief exploration of Hinduism and Buddhism. Through

comparative analysis of these religions, we will strive to determine similarities and differences in particular approaches to God, worship, institution, and moral conduct.

Only open to students that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

20522 RST 100-K, COR: What to Do With Suffering? 3 credits

20523 RST 100-M, COR: What to Do With Suffering? 3 credits

Prof. H. Dubois

From religious leaders to artists to politicians, people use the language of suffering to express deeply held experiences and to justify a bewildering range of behaviors. The first part of this course analyzes different types of suffering, explained in terms of violence, injustice, trauma, finitude, and transformation. The second part is a survey of constructive responses to suffering, discussed in terms of healing, justice, solidarity, accompaniment, and understanding. Throughout, the course pays attention particularly to Christian theological and spiritual interpretations and practices.

Only open to students that have not completed the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

20524 RST 120-A, FYS: Deviance and the Devine 4 credits (First-Year Seminar)

Prof. S. Lowin

This course will use the concept of deviance as the lens through which we will study the three major monotheistic traditions of the world – Islam, Judaism and Christianity. What are the major tenets and beliefs of each? What do they share and where are the conflicts? What does each consider normative and why? When does a belief or practice cross the line in deviance? Ultimately, are they all simply deviants of one another? In our investigation, we will also look to some lesser known religious traditions as foils, such as Scientology, Raelianism, the Nation of Islam, Jews for Jesus, Mormonism, and Christian Science.

Only open to students that have not completed the First-Year Seminar and Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

20525 RST 126-A, COR: Critique of Religion 4 credits (First-Year Seminar)

20526 RST 126-A, COR: Critique of Religion 4 credits (First-Year Seminar)

Prof. D. Ullucci

This course is an introduction to the critical, academic study of religion. It will touch on both personal and broader societal issues that are involved in the contemporary study of religion. It will examine several of the most prominent modern critiques of religion, as well as the various responses to those critiques. Further, it will explore and ask students to reflect on the meaning of religion in today's culturally diverse and religiously pluralistic world. Its objectives are to acquire a basic knowledge of some of the foundational theories of religion, to acquire a working understanding of various methodologies in the critical study of religion, to reflect on one's own understanding and experience of religion, and to reflect on the role of religion in the contemporary world.

Only open to students that have not completed the First-Year Seminar and Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.