

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

- 20818 RST 111-A, CS: Religions of the World 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**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.
- Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20815 RST 117-A, HON: CS: Gods, Myths, and Rituals in the Ancient Mediterranean 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**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. Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20819 RST 118-A, CS: Pilgrimage in Nature 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**20820 RST 118-B, CS: Pilgrimage in Nature 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**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.
- Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20524 RST 120-A, CS: Deviance and the Divine 3 credits (Cornerstone 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.
- Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20821 RST 121-A, CS: Religion as Pharmakon: Poison or Cure 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**20824 RST 121-B, CS: Religion as Pharmakon: Poison or Cure 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**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.
- Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.
- 20826 RST 122-A, CS: Pilgrimage and Passage: Religion as “Sacred” Journey 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**20827 RST 122-B, CS: Pilgrimage and Passage: Religion as “Sacred” Journey 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**  
**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.

Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**20816 RST 124-A, CS: God Doesn't Do Religion 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**

**20817 RST 124-B, CS: God Doesn't Do Religion 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**

**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.

Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**20525 RST 126-A, CS: Critique of Religion 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**

**20526 RST 126-B, CS: Critique of Religion 3 credits (Cornerstone 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.

Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.

**20869 RST 131-A, COR: What to Do With Suffering? 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**

**20870 RST 131-B, COR: What to Do With Suffering? 3 credits (Cornerstone Seminar)**

**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.

Fulfills the First-Year Seminar and the Religious Studies Cornerstone requirement.