RLS

Religious Studies

RLS 101 - B: Western Religions
An historical introduction to Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Attention is given to the cultural background, art, literature, philosophy, and institutional development of each tradition.

3 credits

RLS 102 - B: Eastern Religions
An historical introduction to Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism. Attention is given to the cultural background, art, literature, philosophy, and institutional development of each tradition. This course is offered as both AAS 102 and RLS 102.

3 credits

RLS 230 - G: Judaism
A survey of the great texts of the Judaic heritage, with the aim of learning the contribution of each to the Jewish tradition. The course includes an examination of characteristic Jewish beliefs, practices, and attitudes. This course is offered as both JDH 230 and RLS 230.

3 credits

RLS 240 - J: Confucianism and Taoism
An introduction to the basic philosophies and doctrines of Confucianism and Taoism, such as the concept of Tao, non-action, benevolence, and propriety. The course explores both the similarities and the differences between these two traditions. This course is offered as both AAS 240 and RLS 240.

3 credits

RLS 246 - J: Korean and Japanese Religions
An introduction to Korean and Japanese religious history from earliest recorded periods to the 19th century. Emphasis is given to Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, Korean Shamanism, and Japanese Shintoism. Relationships between the Korean variant of religious traditions and those of China and Japan are also investigated. Crosslisted with AAS 246.

3 credits

RLS 256 - J: Hinduism
Survey of the principal religious and philosophical currents of Hindu civilization in India from the time of the Vedas and Upanishads through the development of the major devotional ways and schools of thought current in India today. These include the polytheism of Hindu mythology, the theism of various forms of devotional practice, and the monotheism and nondualism of Hindu philosophy. This course is offered as both AAS 256 and RLS 256.

Advisory Prerequisite: Completion of D.E.C. category B

3 credits

RLS 260 - J: Buddhism
An introduction to the basic philosophy and doctrines of Buddhism, beginning with a survey of lives and works of major historical figures of Buddhism. The principal issues of Buddhist thought, drawing from Indian, East Asian, and Western sources, are treated. Particular attention is paid to the meaning of faith, practice, and enlightenment in Buddhism. This course is offered as both AAS 260 and RLS 260.

3 credits

RLS 270 - I: Christianity
A critical introduction to the scripture, tradition, history, and religious practices and beliefs of Christianity as one of the principal factors in the shaping of European culture.

3 credits

RLS 280 - J: Islam
An introduction to the main features of Islamic revelation as contained in the Koran and its impact on the major spiritual, intellectual, legal, and social teachings and institutions of the Islamic world. The course concludes with an examination of Islam in the modern world. This course is offered as both AAS 280 and RLS 280.

3 credits

RLS 301 - G: Sources and Methods
An in-depth inquiry into the application of critical, historical, and philosophical methods to religious texts and experiences. An introduction to the resources and limitations of academic study of religion.

Prerequisite: any 200-level or higher RLS course

3 credits

RLS 310 - G: Biblical Theology
Intensive introduction to the theological tendencies and implications of selected major texts from the Christian and Jewish scriptures. The course surveys historical and critical work on the selected texts, but focuses on the religious thinking reflected in them and their influence on later traditions. May be repeated once as the topic changes.

Prerequisite: U3 or U4 standing
Advisory Prerequisite: Varies according to topic

3 credits

RLS 320 - G: The Rabbinic Tradition
The origin and development of the Rabbinic tradition, examination of the chief elements of Rabbinic teaching at various times, and analysis of the major types of Rabbinic literature. This course is offered as both JDH 320 and RLS 320.

Prerequisite: JDH/HIS 225 or 226 or JDH/RLS 230

3 credits

RLS 366 - G: Feminine Spirituality
The role and destiny of human beings as envisaged by the world's great traditions, especially the Chinese and the Islamic. The course focuses on the concept of femininity as a principle in the realms of theology, metaphysics, cosmology, and spiritual psychology; and the theoretical and practical applications of the feminine principle to the place of both men and women in society. Topics include feminine and masculine as metaphysical and cosmological principles; woman and religious law; woman's role in symbolism, mythology, and literature; and the feminine aspects of the self that both women and men need to develop on the path of achieving spiritual perfection. Previously offered as RLS 426, this course is now offered as RLS 366. Not for credit in addition to the former RLS 426. This course is offered as both AAS 366 and RLS 366.

Prerequisite: any 200-level or higher RLS course

3 credits

RLS 367 - J: Meditation and Enlightenment
A critical analysis of the traditions, practices, and literature of Zen and other traditions of Buddhism, with particular attention paid to the meaning of enlightenment and the practice of meditation. Previously offered as RLS 341, this course is now offered as both AAS 367 and RLS 367. Not for credit in addition to the former RLS 341.

Prerequisite: AAS/RLS 102 or 260

3 credits

RLS 368 - J: Yoga: Theory and Praxis
In this course we investigate Yogic systems of philosophy and self-transformation in their many forms throughout history. Topics
include the origins of Yoga in ancient India, the philosophy of the Yoga Sutras and its commentarial traditions, Buddhist Yoga, Hatha Yoga, Tantric Yoga, and the medicalization and globalization of Yoga in the modern period. Students are encouraged to supplement class discussions by participating in Yoga classes at the Stony Brook University Wellness Center. This course is offered as both AAS 368 and RLS 368.

Prerequisite: Previous course in AAS or RLS
Advisory Prerequisite: Junior or Senior standing
3 credits

RLS 380 - G: Islamic Classics
A study in depth of Islamic texts in translation. Selections may be made from the Qur'an, the Hadith, the Law, and from one or more of the major intellectual schools, such as Kalam (scholastic theology), Peripatetic philosophy, illuminationist theosophy, Sufism, and the “transcendent theosophy” of the School of Isfahan. May be repeated as the topic changes. Previously offered as RLS 408, this course is now offered as both AAS 380 and RLS 380.
Prerequisite: AAS/RLS 280
3 credits

RLS 382 - G: Japanese Buddhism
An introduction to the teachings and practices of two major schools of Japanese Buddhism: Zen and Pure Land. The course focuses on the writings of the founders of the important lineages within these schools. Formerly offered as RLS 406, this course is now offered as both AAS 382 and RLS 382. Not for credit in addition to the former RLS 406.
Prerequisite: AAS/RLS 260
3 credits

RLS 387 - J: Islam and Confucianism
The goal of this course is to compare the basic teachings of Islam and Confucianism concerning the correct way to achieve true human status. Special stress will be placed on books that Muslim scholars wrote in Chinese beginning in the seventeenth century. These books employed Neo-Confucian language to introduce Chinese Muslims to their own theology, cosmology, and spiritual psychology, thus providing a rare pre-modern example of inter-religious dialogue. This course is offered as both AAS 387 and RLS 387.
3 credits

RLS 390 - G: Special Topics
Semester supplements to this Bulletin contain specific descriptions when course is offered. Past topics have included Philosophical Mysticism; Religion and Science; and Islam and Confucianism. Semester supplements to this Bulletin contain specific descriptions when course is offered. May be repeated for credit as the topic changes. Designed for upper-division students, this course provides an in-depth study of a specific topic within humanities disciplines such as music, art, literature, religion, and philosophy. Students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods used in the humanities discipline(s) studied. May be repeated as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: U3 or U4 standing
Advisory Prerequisite: Completion of D.E.C. category B
3 credits

RLS 391 - G: Special Topics
Semester supplements to this Bulletin contain specific descriptions when course is offered. Past topics have included Philosophical Mysticism; Religion and Science; and Islam and Confucianism. Semester supplements to this Bulletin contain specific descriptions when course is offered. May be repeated for credit as the topic changes. Designed for upper-division students, this course provides an in-depth study of a specific topic within humanities disciplines such as music, art, literature, religion, and philosophy. Students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of the conventions and methods used in the humanities discipline(s) studied. May be repeated as the topic changes.
Prerequisite: U3 or U4 standing
Advisory Prerequisite: Completion of D.E.C. category B
3 credits

RLS 400: Religious Studies Seminar
A seminar for senior majors in religious studies, focusing on the problem of the relation between phenomenology, hermeneutics, and history of religions on the one hand and their theological and philosophic interpretation on the other.
Prerequisite: Permission of the director of undergraduate studies
3 credits

RLS 415 - G: Judaic Response to Catastrophe
The response of Judaic thinkers, from the Bible to the Second World War, to the problem of historical disaster and the need to understand and respond to it. Particular attention is given to the question of long-term continuity and the appearance of innovation in such responses. This course is offered as both JDH 415 and RLS 415.
Prerequisite: JDH/HIS 225 or 226 or JDH/RLS 230
3 credits

RLS 447: Readings in Religious Studies
Directed readings with religious studies faculty, limited to religious studies majors or upper-division students working on advanced problems in religious studies. May be repeated.
Prerequisite: Permission of program coordinator
1-6 credits

RLS 475: Undergraduate Teaching Practicum
Students assist instructors in religious studies courses with large enrollments. Under the supervision of the course instructor, they are responsible for conducting discussion and review sections of the course and helping students with course readings and assignments such as research papers.
Prerequisites: U4 standing in religious studies major; permission of instructor and program director
3 credits, S/U grading

RLS 495: Senior Honors Project
First course of a two-semester project for RLS majors who are candidates for the degree with honors. Arranged with the program during the student's junior year, the project involves independent study and the writing of a paper under close supervision of an appropriate faculty member, on a topic chosen by the student. Students receive only one grade upon completion of the sequence.
Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and program director
3 credits

RLS 496: Senior Honors Project
Second course of a two-semester project for RLS majors who are candidates for the degree with honors. Arranged with the program during the student's junior year, the project involves independent study and the writing of a paper under close supervision of an appropriate faculty member, on a topic chosen by the student. Students receive only one grade upon completion of the sequence.
Prerequisite: Permission of instructor and program director
3 credits