

# RELIGION (REL)

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## **REL 199 - Exploration Seminar, 0 credits.**

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

## **REL 200 - Christianity and Religious Diversity, 4 credits.**

This course seeks to meet the needs of all students for a better understanding of religion as a basic feature of human life and of Christianity's classic and contemporary expressions and the rich diversity of religion. The four modes of religious inquiry (interpretive, historical, comparative and constructive) that are appropriate to the study of religion will be used to examine the complexity of religion in the modern world. The course offers an important initial opportunity for integrative study that is characteristic of a liberal arts education. It invites students to engage in thoughtful and informed reflection upon religious questions.

**Frequency:** *Every Semester*

## **REL 210 - Invitation to the Study of Religion, 4 credits.**

This course is open to religion majors and minors, sophomores and above. REL 210 uses the seminar format to engage students in systematic reflection concerning how the sub-disciplines in the field of religion can contribute to a common topic. The class prepares students for the rigors of REL 410 and the methodological approaches of the academic study of religion.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

## **REL 211 - Biblical Hebrew I, 4 credits.**

This course is a study of the language of the Hebrew Bible, including basic grammar, leading to the reading of prose passages.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

## **REL 212 - Biblical Hebrew II, 4 credits.**

This course is the second half of study of the language of the Hebrew Bible, including basic grammar, leading to the reading of prose passages. This course can also count toward the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 211

**Core designations:** World Language W

## **REL 225 - Religion in Film, 4 credits.**

This course is a study of the religious content and focus of the place and importance of film in culture. As a 200 level courses it is an introduction to the examination of film from a religious and critical perspective, in particular the four modes of inquiry (interpretive, historical, comparative, and constructive). The types of films that will be examined range from historical classics, international films, documentaries, popular film, films from great directors, and much more. This course can also count toward the Film Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

## **REL 230 - Introduction to Interfaith Studies, 4 credits.**

This course provides the religious literacy, skills and appreciative knowledge necessary for interfaith leadership. What makes an interfaith leader? How do we respectfully dialogue with people who belong to religious (and non-religious) traditions other than our own? How do we cooperate with people of different faith backgrounds to achieve the common good and protect pluralism?

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

## **REL 244 - Religion and Popular Culture, 4 credits.**

This course is a study of the interrelationship between religion and contemporary popular culture. This course will analyze how religious faith shapes culture, as well as how contemporary popular culture affects the understanding and expression of religious faith. It will focus upon the portrayal of religious faith in contemporary expressions of culture in mass media (e.g. print, film, television, music and computer technology), social issues and institutions. The course will introduce students to the variety of religious and theological understandings currently present in American society. Students will learn how to do theological analysis and critique of popular cultural movements and expressions. This course can also count toward the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Core designations:** U.S. Cultural Diversity U

## **REL 245 - Sex, Love and Death: God and the Human Life Cycle, 4 credits.**

This course focuses upon the questions and issues related to human development from a theological perspective. It explores the foundational human experiences of sexual identity, love and death through developmental theories and faith understanding, including the spiritual quests for meaning that they elicit. The purpose is to place foundational personal and social events in a theological context which will seek to encourage transcendent perspective as well as cultivate social and ethical critique. It will address issues of gender identity, sexual ethics, the nature of love, both human and divine, as well as the meaning and significance of human death.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

## **REL 250 - Pre-May Seminar, 4 credits.**

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

## **REL 300 - May Seminar, 4 credits.**

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

## **REL 313 - Jesus the Jew-Jesus the Christ, 4 credits.**

This course is an examination of the context and character of Jesus of Nazareth and his reception in early Christian communities. This course investigates Jesus' life and death in the social and religious context of first-century Palestine and the broader Roman Empire. It examines the Gospels as literary narratives that tell the stories of Jesus. This course further explores how Jesus became the focus of Christian thought and ritual practice.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

## **REL 314 - Paul: Apostle or Apostate, 4 credits.**

This course is a study of the historical circumstances of Paul, the religious and theological significance of his epistles, and his legacy for the Christian church. Paul is one of the most important people in the formation of early Christianity, and has left us some of the most significant documents in the New Testament, the Pauline Epistles. Paul, however, was not appreciated by many of his contemporaries or by many people in the church since his time. He has been a figure of much controversy historically, and this course will explore why that is the case.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 316 - The Good Life: Old Testament Perspectives, 4 credits.**

What is "the good life?" This course explores various perspectives on "the good life" contained in the writings of the Old Testament. Comparisons will be made to contemporary views. The course will also look at what the biblical writings picture as obstacles to "the good life" and what are viewed as challenges today. This course can also count towards the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year-1st or 2nd Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 317 - Making Meaning: Reading, Interpreting and Teaching the Bible, 4 credits.**

This course provides hands-on experience reading and interpreting the Bible with attention to the Bible's ancient and modern audiences, its public uses, its genres, cultures and themes, the social locations of its readers, methods and the ethics of drawing meaning from its content, and views of the Bible's relationship to the sacred texts of other faith communities.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Corequisites:** PEAK 400

**Core designations:** Religion II J

This course is PEAK Required

**REL 318 - Women, Religion and Literature, 4 credits.**

This course is an investigation of the images and status of women in the Judeo-Christian tradition and in Western literature from an interdisciplinary perspective. The interplay of these scripts in the psychosocial and spiritual formation of contemporary men and women will be assessed. This course can also count toward the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**REL 319 - Trauma, Resistance, Resilience: Old Testament Perspectives, 4 credits.**

Human life involves encounters with trauma which can have profound physical, emotional, cognitive, and spiritual effects on individuals and communities. This course explores poetic, prophetic, and narrative encounters with trauma in the Old Testament. It uses trauma-informed research in interpreting biblical texts, considering contemporary parallels, and reflecting on identity, healing, resilience, reconciliation, and hope.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 324 - The Legacy of Luther, 4 credits.**

This course is a study of the life and work of Martin Luther, who will be looked at in the context of Medieval and Reformation Europe. The legacy of Luther's ideas and their impact on movements and denominations down to the modern age will also be examined. This course can also count toward the Global Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years-1st or 2nd Sem*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 325 - Studies in Religious History, 4 credits.**

This course examines the historical development of religious institutions and theological traditions through varied selected topics. It investigates diverse groups and significant individuals that have shaped or reshaped specific religious traditions. It traces the development and impact of religious interpretations, teaching, and practices, such as prayer, the Sermon on the Mount in political resistance and social justice, and views of death and the afterlife. Repeat credit is allowed for varying topics.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years-1st or 2nd Sem*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**Repeatable:** Yes

**REL 326 - Christian Theologies and Ethics, 4 credits.**

This course is a study of the historical development of central theological beliefs of the Christian Church and of its ethical thought through the centuries. The course will explore representative Christian teachings in theology and ethics, investigate their evolution over time, and consider their expressions in church creeds and wider cultural life.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 328 - Catholicism, 4 credits.**

This course explores the Roman Catholic tradition and its diverse expressions of faith. It considers historical developments within the tradition, with a particular focus on the changes initiated by Vatican II. Students will study topics ranging from official teachings of the Magisterium on particular issues, to the challenges facing the Catholic Church in the U.S., to the popular forms of Catholicism in a world church, to the struggles for social and environmental justice among Catholics. Tensions between official church teachings on particular issues (including women's roles, the death penalty, homosexuality, war and peace, and religious pluralism) and the variety of beliefs among faithful Catholics will be considered. Students will be encouraged to develop a critical and complex understanding of this particular faith tradition.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 332 - American Religions: Natives and Immigrants, 4 credits.**

This course surveys the major teachings and practices of various religions in the United States, with special attention to religious diversity both within and among various traditions. In exploring the religious beliefs and practices of both "natives" and "immigrants" in America, students consider the various expressions of Protestant Christianity, as well as Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Native American religions. Of particular interest will be how these religions interact with aspects of American culture, the relationship between religious freedom and religious diversity, the ways in which members of different religious groups seek recognition and power, and the challenges and conflicts that result. Although the primary focus of the course will be on contemporary expressions of religion in America, we will also consider historical perspectives on and examples of the intersection of "religion" and "American culture."

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** U.S. Cultural Diversity U, Religion II J

**REL 334 - Monotheisms: Abrahamic Traditions in the Modern World, 4 credits.**

This course examines Jewish, Christian, and Muslim traditions through the interpretive lenses of history, scripture, theology, ethics, and spirituality. It also explores the contributions made by these traditions to the birth and development of the modern world, as well as the diverse and creative ways in which each of them has responded to the challenges of modernity. This course can also count toward the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 2nd Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 338 - Religions of East Asia, 4 credits.**

This course is an introduction to the religious traditions of East Asia. The course focuses on materials from China, Japan, and Korea, especially the "Three Teachings": Daoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism. Students will examine ways East Asian people have understood human action in society and the cosmos, and explore ways that East Asian traditions challenge and often confound Euro-American expectations about religions. This course can count toward the Global Studies Program and the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 339 - World Christianity, 4 credits.**

This course looks at the current manifestation of Christianity as a global religion in its diversity and complexity, studying the most important contemporary developments in Christianity around the globe (outside the North Atlantic.) These developments are considered, first, as social (religious) phenomena, which need to be studied in relation to local (and sometimes global) political, historical, economic, social, and religious factors. Yet the course also engages specifically Christian theological questions that arise from the development of Christianity as a global yet diverse reality. This course can also count toward the Global Studies Program and the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year-1st or 2nd Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Religion II J

**REL 340 - The Ethics of Aid and Development, 4 credits.**

This course is an examination of voluntary responses to war, civil conflict and natural disaster, with a focus both on individual action and organizations. The course addresses both "aid" (direct financial and material support) and "development" (the upward social, economic and political trajectory of escape from conflict and poverty), and explores what can be accomplished with reference to real-world cases. This course can also count toward the Global Studies Program and the Social Activism Program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G

**REL 342 - God: The Question and the Quest, 4 credits.**

Students in this course explore the meaning of "God," different ways to imagine God, and the concrete implications of various understandings of God from the perspectives of existentialist, Black, feminist, Womanist, and ecological theologians/thinkers who represent diverse religious and philosophical traditions. Students will also consider how our images of God shape our relationships with ourselves, our bodies, and others. This course can also count toward the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 343 - Science and Religion, 4 credits.**

This course is an examination of the similarities and differences in methodology between several of the natural sciences and religion. Focusing upon issues of interdisciplinary importance, this course will assist in analyzing the interaction of different views and the presuppositions involved. The relation of creation and evolution, life and mind, and other such issues will be addressed.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 344 - Christian Ethics in Human Community, 4 credits.**

This course is a study in constructive moral reflection on roles and relations in the Christian life. This course will examine questions about how Christians should live as people of God, as friends and family members, as workers, as citizens of a democratic state and a pluralistic global society. It aims to equip students to think critically and responsibly about living with persons in different social contexts and communities.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 348 - Ethics of Sustainable Community, 4 credits.**

This course is a study in constructive moral reflection on human relations to nature within the Christian life. The course will examine questions about whether Christians should love nature and, if so, how. It aims to equip students to think critically and responsibly about the Christian and American environmental traditions, about current and expected challenges to sustainable planetary life, and about norms and practical strategies. This course can also count toward the Global Studies Program and the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**REL 360 - Religion & Political Economy, 4 credits.**

This course will introduce students to selected aspects of the relationship between religion and the economy. Students will explore the impact of religious teachings on economic behavior, the influence of economic forces on religious developments, the economic ethics of major religious traditions, and the economic approaches to the interpretation of religious phenomena.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 362 - Approaching the Qur'an, 4 credits.**

This is an introductory course in the academic study of the Islamic scripture, the Qur'an. The course will provide some of the basic analytical tools needed for approaching and appreciating the text and teachings of the Qur'an, including an introduction to its historical context, literary qualities, esthetic reception and interpretive traditions - both classical and modern. The course is aimed at helping students understand the nature and function of the Islamic scripture both in its native context of Muslim history and cultural life, as well as in its relation to the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament. This course can also count towards the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 363 - Dealing with Difference: Conflict and Cooperation in Early Christianities, 4 credits.**

Rapid geographic expansion and lack of centralized authority led to a wide variety of Christianities in the 1st-3rd centuries of the Common Era. These various groups grappled with each other and with the wider Roman world around them on issues of ethnicity, ideology, gender, and belonging. This course will explore these conflicts and how the various groups addressed difference in both constructive and destructive ways.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 370 - Religion in a Global Context, 4 credits.**

This is an off campus/international summer school course that emphasizes the examination of religion primarily from an historical focus (traditions, beliefs, and practices), but also cultural, and socio-political contexts. The course provides in-depth experiential engagement with religion in a global setting.

**Frequency:** *Summer Session*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Religion II J

**Repeatable:** Yes

**REL 372 - Christian Spirituality, 4 credits.**

This course on Christian Spirituality is an examination of the historical development of Christian spiritual movements. In particular, this class will take a historical look at experiential expressions of the Christian faith as they are manifest in spiritual traditions, such as monastic and/or mendicant communities, mysticism, Christian social and political activist groups, fundamentalists and the like. It will do so by studying the development of the classic religious spiritual writings, art and artifacts, practices and thought, and public expressions of faith.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 374 - Women's Religious History, 4 credits.**

In this course, students use historical and feminist frameworks to explore some of the major themes, questions, and tensions that shape the study of women in religious history. This course focuses on the lives and images of women in various traditions in different eras, using both primary and secondary texts. Students will investigate the ambiguous function of religion in the lives of historical women - its capacity for oppressing and/or empowering women in different circumstances, cultures, traditions and eras. This course can also count toward the Women's and Gender Studies Program and the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 375 - Compassionate Justice, 1 credits.**

This 1-credit PEAK-required course involves weekly visits to the West Central Regional Juvenile Center (WCRJC), where Concordia students and their professor practice mindfulness meditation with the youth living there, followed by small group discussions with the residents. Class meets on campus prior to our visits to the WCRJC to discuss assigned readings related to systemic injustices and the criminal punishment system.

**Frequency:** *Summer Session*

**Corequisites:** PEAK 400

This course is PEAK Required

**REL 379 - Religion, Race & Social Justice, 4 credits.**

This course explores how various religious, spiritual, and ethical values and practices can promote—or impede—racial equality, social responsibility, and personal wellbeing in the face of systemic injustice and internalized dominance/oppression. The PEAK component of this course involves practicing mindfulness meditation alongside at-risk youth at Moorhead's Juvenile Detention Center. This course can also count towards the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Corequisites:** PEAK 400

**Core designations:** Religion II J

This course is PEAK Required

**REL 380 - Special Topics, 0-4 credits.**

Courses covering various topics of interest in this particular discipline are offered regularly. Contact department or program chair for more information.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**REL 382 - Religion and the Body, 4 credits.**

This course explores the role of the body in world religions and in contemporary U.S. culture, especially the relationship between "mind," "body" and "spirit." A "lab" in which students learn Aikido, a Japanese martial art, will supplement readings, papers, and discussions. Students enrolling in Religion 382 are required to participate in this lab. This course can also count towards the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G, Religion II J

**REL 384 - Exploring Islam, 4 credits.**

This is an introductory course in classic Islamic history and tradition. It will examine the social, political and cultural environment, as well as the key figures and defining events, of the formative period of Islam (seventh to ninth centuries), before exploring the various dimensions of the Islamic tradition as articulated by some of the most influential Muslim authorities. While the focus of this course is on the classical period, it will frequently refer to modern Islam in terms of both continuations and ruptures, thereby illuminating the unique promise and predicament of contemporary Islam. This course can also count toward the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Alternate Years - 1st Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 386 - Religion in the Postcolonial World, 4 credits.**

This course focuses on the role of religious traditions, communities, and leaderships during and after colonial rule with specific attention to the role of religion in the exercise and resistance of colonial power and postcolonial construction of national identity. The course considers how religions have been (re)constructed in the context of colonial encounters and postcolonial nationalism, and how religions are affecting postcolonial developments such as nation-building, economic development, regional stability and ethnic relationships. Close attention is also given to the interaction between religions in the colonial/postcolonial context, as well as the relationships between religious and other social identities, such as ethnicity, gender, race and class/caste. This course can also count toward the Global Studies Program and the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 387 - Religions of India, 4 credits.**

This course is an introduction to the religious cultures of the Indian subcontinent. The course concentrates on Hinduism and Buddhism, but also considers Jainism, Sikhism, and South Asian Islam. Students will consider ways these religions explain the world and the nature of divinity, and in particular how the religions of India have engaged in complex conversations about human action. This course can also count toward the Global Studies Program and the Interfaith Studies Program and the Environmental Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 388 - Religion, Violence, and Nonviolence, 4 credits.**

Religion can encourage acts of violent aggression and cruelty, as well as acts of peacemaking and compassion. This course will examine the roots of organized violence in human cultures, with particular attention to the role of religion in the genesis and justification of such violence. At the same time, it will explore the religious values and teachings that support nonviolence, both as a way of life and as a strategy for social change. Students will learn to appreciate the peacemaking potential of religion by engaging with a variety of primary and secondary sources, as well as by examining several case studies. This course can also count toward the Interfaith Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - Second Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 390 - Academic Internship, 1-8 credits.**

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**REL 392 - Religion and World Affairs, 4 credits.**

This course looks at religion in the context of global issues that are relevant to the present day, especially on an international, but also on a local level. Topics for the course will vary depending on the issues of the present day and scholarly expertise of the instructor.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** International-Global Prspct G

**REL 393 - Religion and Ecology, 4 credits.**

This course explores various perspectives on nature and the human-earth relations within world-religions against the background of the ecological crisis. Because world-religions importantly shape people's worldviews, they greatly determine the way people interact with each other and the rest of nature. The course will engage teachings from all world-religions. Depending on the instructor, the course will have a special focus on Christianity, Islam, or Asian traditions. This course can also count toward the Environmental and Sustainability Studies Program.

**Frequency:** *Every Year-1st or 2nd Semester*

**Prerequisites:** REL 200

**Core designations:** Religion II J

**REL 410 - Research Seminar, 4 credits.**

For religion majors and minors, this course uses the seminar format to engage students in systematic reflection about the ways in which the modes of inquiry in the field of religion can contribute to the consideration of a common topic. Each student will complete a research project under the supervision of the instructor and present the results in a paper to the seminar for critique and discussion.

**Frequency:** *Every Year - First Semester*

**REL 480 - Independent Study, 1-4 credits.**

This course provides an opportunity for individual students to conduct in-depth study of a particular topic under the supervision of a faculty member. Contact the department or program chair for more information.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**REL 487 - Directed Research, 1-4 credits.**

This course provides an opportunity for individual students to conduct research in a specific area of study, completed under the direction of a faculty mentor. Specific expectations of the research experience to be determined by the faculty. Repeatable for credit. Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*

**Repeatable:** Yes

**REL 490 - Practicum, 4 credits.**

**Frequency:** *Not offered on a Regular Basis*