

# Department of Religious Studies

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## Why study religious studies?

Religions have been and remain among the most powerful forces shaping human history. Their discourses and practices inform the way we perceive ourselves, those around us, and existence at large, even when we are not actively religious. They are central to understanding both what divides us and what unites us. The academic study of religion is a trans-disciplinary endeavor to understand from an objective perspective how religious traditions shape the lives of their adherents, without seeking to promote or disprove any specific belief system. Religious Studies acquaints students with the diversity of religious cultures and introduces them to key methods and theories employed in their examination as "religion."

## Undergraduate Programs

The undergraduate degree in the Department of Religious Studies is a research, analysis, and writing intensive program that features close work with faculty in small classroom settings. It seeks to develop a foundational knowledge of the world's diversity of religious cultures and critical awareness of the ways in which religion shapes how we see and act toward ourselves, others, and the environment around us. Through the study of specific religious traditions and settings, students come away with a background that is invaluable to understanding and working with people of other cultures, whether in international business or simply as an informed global citizen.

## Graduate Programs

**IMPORTANT:** The Religious Studies Graduate Program is currently suspended. The department is not accepting applications for the 2025-2026 academic year.

The department offers a graduate program leading to the Master's of Arts, as well as a Graduate Certificate program. Both programs enable students to pursue specialized advanced work that builds on the interests of the students in tandem with the specializations of the faculty. At all levels, interdepartmental and interdisciplinary cooperation is encouraged as important to a comprehensive program. Continuing research in religious studies is indispensable and intimately related both to teaching and to the wider exchange and advancement of knowledge.

The Department of Religious Studies at KU is also generally able to provide substantial financial support for students seeking the M.A. degree in the department. Non-degree seeking students who have completed an undergraduate degree may apply to take graduate-level courses in Religious Studies.

## Courses

### REL 100. Introduction to Religious Ethics. 3 Credits. AE51 AH

In this class we will learn how religious values are used to make ethical judgments, but we will also ask if and how those judgments influence practices or the behavior of people in their everyday lives. What causes a disjunction between norms and behavior? What is the tension between different values when deciding how to act? What about differences of opinion between and even within different religious traditions? What happens when societal expectations conflict with religious values or vice versa? Or when ethical reasoning leads to two different conclusions about

how to act? Using specific cases, such as human rights, environmental and sexual ethics, race and violence students will learn how ethical reasoning unfolds in different religious traditions, what values support that reasoning and what happens in society when those values compete.

### REL 102. Violence and Religious Ethics. 3 Credits. AE51 AH

This course will examine the connection between violence and religion from an ethical perspective. It will focus primarily on Jewish, Christian and Muslim ethical theories, which will be compared and applied to specific cases. We will also consider the ethical justifications for inter-religious conflict and the impact violence has had on targeted religious communities. The course will begin with an interrogation of the meaning of religion, ethics and religious violence-exploring questions like: Are religions inherently violent? Are theories derived from religious ethics used to justify violence? How are acts of violence morally justified? We will then consider these questions in more depth by comparing ethical theories within Judaism, Christianity and Islam, such as just war theory and jihad theory, to see whether religions encourage or seek to curb violence. In addition, each moral theory will be studied in light of specific historical or present cases. Case studies include the Crusades, Medieval Spain, ISIS, white nationalism in America, and recent killings in places of worship. The course will end on a positive note, by examining ethical theories within religions that promote peace, and comparing theories that justify peace with theories that justify war.

### REL 104. Introduction to Religious Studies. 3 Credits. GE3H SWT AH

This course introduces students to the academic study of religions. It acquaints students with key methods and issues in religious studies, and provides an introductory survey of selected religions.

### REL 106. Asian Religions. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC

A basic introduction to religion in India, China, and Japan with emphasis upon religions that affect the modern period. (Same as EALC 105.)

### REL 107. Jews, Christians, Muslims. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC

A basic introduction to the major religious traditions of the Near East, Europe, and the Americas, with an emphasis on their development through the modern period and their expressions in contemporary life. (Same as JWSH 107.)

### REL 108. Asian Religions, Honors. 3 Credits.

A basic introduction to religion in India, China, and Japan, with emphasis upon religions that affect the modern period. Open only to students in the University Honors Program or by permission of instructor. Not open to students who have taken REL 106/EALC 105.

### REL 124. Understanding the Bible. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC

This course serves as an introduction to the literature of the Bible. Students will explore the relationships between various types of literature in the Bible as well as the functions this literature served in the history and religious life of the people who produced and used it. The focus of the course will be on examining the purpose and meaning of biblical texts during the time and culture in which they were originally written. Distinctive theological concerns and literary features of individual texts will be studied in light of their historical context in ancient Israel (for the Hebrew Bible) and the Greco-Roman world (for the New Testament). Not open to students who have taken REL 125 or JWSH 125. (Same as JWSH 124.)

### REL 125. Understanding the Bible, Honors. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC

An introduction to the history and literature of the Bible. This course will explore the meaning of the Bible in its ancient cultural context. Cannot be taken concurrently with REL 315. Not open to students who have taken REL 124 or JWSH 124. (Same as JWSH 125.)

**REL 129. Jesus at the Movies. 3 Credits.**

Who was Jesus, really? Over the past two thousand years, countless authors and filmmakers have reimagined the figure of Jesus in their works. This course will explore portrayals of Jesus in film, analyzing the ways that Jesus has been characterized in them and the motivations behind these characterizations. Through in-class discussions and writing assignments, we will collectively examine five contemporary films about the life of Jesus: Jesus Christ Superstar, The Last Temptation of Christ, The Passion of the Christ, Jesus of Montreal, and Life of Brian. To fully appreciate the rhetorical adaptations occurring in these films, we must first have a strong understanding of the life of Jesus as portrayed in the earliest literary sources. As it turns out, reshaping the figure of Jesus goes all the way back to the Bible itself, which contains multiple biographies of Jesus that all give very distinct impressions of what he was like. We will critically assess the biblical accounts of the life of Jesus and discover the theological agendas, cultural contexts, and historical considerations that caused them to be so different from one another. We will also read depictions of Jesus in ancient Christian writings deemed too scandalous to be included in the Bible and the earliest Jewish and Islamic sources to see how they reshape the figure of Jesus as well.

**REL 130. Myth, Legend, and Folk Beliefs in East Asia. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC**

A survey of the commonly held ideas about the beginning of the world, the role of gods and spirits in daily life, and the celebrations and rituals proper to each season of the year. The purpose of the course is to present the traditional world view of the peoples of East Asia. (Same as ANTH 293, EALC 130.)

**REL 137. Religious Ethics and Moral Decisions. 3 Credits. AE51 AH**

When faced with ethical dilemmas how do we decide what is the right course of action? In what ways are our decisions affected by religious ideas about morality? In this class we examine the ethical problems we encounter every day in light of the solutions offered from various religious traditions. Cases to be examined include issues of life and death, war and peace, sexual morals, torture, the treatment of animals and the environment.

**REL 138. Religion and Moral Decisions, Honors. 3 Credits.**

Honors version of REL 137. Introduction to religious viewpoints on individual and social ethics. This course examines the influence of religious thought on the making of moral decisions, and on value development in relation to specific moral issues. Open only to students who have been admitted to the University Honors Program or by permission of instructor.

**REL 145. Jailbirds and Jayhawks: Abolition in Bleeding Kansas. 3 Credits.**

This course connects the history of Kansas to past and present freedom movements. Students explore the significance of the KU Jayhawk during 19th century anti-slavery struggles in Lawrence and "Bleeding Kansas." Additionally, participants study broader 21st century resistance strategies captured by social media hashtags, public education campaigns, and collective action to re-galvanize a demand for abolition and the declaration that Black Lives Matter. A focal lens is to examine the role of multiracial, interreligious, and transglobal communities as a guide to advance a faith-based abolitionist movement that imagines a more just and equitable world. Students engage participatory research methods and apply theoretical learning to develop restorative and transformative justice strategies that advance the goals of abolition, including ending policing and prisons locally in the Kansas Metro area and globally. The key themes covered in this course are abolition and art, religion and resistance, gender and punishment, global mass/open-air prisons and

walls, and building abolitionist sanctuaries. This class is an immersive and interactive experience that includes guest speakers, field trips, community organizing, and project-based learning oriented toward ethics and social justice. (Same as AAAS 145.)

**REL 171. Religion in American Society. 3 Credits. AE41 USC**

A broad introduction to religion in American culture. This class emphasizes the well-established religions with large followings (viz. Judaism, Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, and Protestantism). Some attention is also given to other religions active in America. Other topics covered include the relationship of church and state, religion in ethnic and racial minority groups, and women and religion. (Same as AMS 171.)

**REL 176. First Year Seminar: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits. USC**

A limited-enrollment, seminar course for first-time freshmen, addressing current issues in Religious Studies. Course is designed to meet the US Culture of the KU Core 34. First-Year Seminar topics are coordinated and approved by the Undergraduate Education Office within Academic Affairs.

**REL 177. First Year Seminar: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits. GE11 GLBC**

A limited-enrollment, seminar course for first-time freshmen, addressing current issues in Religious Studies. Course is designed to meet the critical thinking learning outcome of the KU Core. First-Year Seminar topics are coordinated and approved by the Office of Academic Programs and Experiential Learning. Prerequisite: Open to Freshmen only (less than 30 hours).

**REL 190. Special Topics in Religion: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits.**

Topic and instructor to be announced in Schedule of Classes. May be offered by different instructors under different subtitles, and may be taken more than once if subject matter varies sufficiently.

**REL 290. Topics in Religion and Society: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits.**

Special topics to be announced in Schedule of Classes, according to research interests of faculty and students. A particular aspect of the study of religion and culture will be emphasized. Course may be taken more than once if the subject matter varies.

**REL 303. Peoples and Cultures of North Africa and the Middle East. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC**

This course familiarizes students with the peoples and cultures of North Africa and the Middle East. It examines the cultural, demographic, and religious diversity of the region, as well as the development of the early Islamic community and the formation of Islamic institutions. Issues such as religion and politics, inter-religious relations, nation-building, Islamic response to colonialism, Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Islamic resurgence, secularism, democratization, and gender, are also explored. (Same as AAAS 303 and ANTH 303.)

**REL 306. God, Buddhism, and the Good Life. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces students to rigorous philosophic debates about some gripping existential questions surrounding the value of religion with God, a religion without God (focusing on Buddhism), and atheism. We will explore arguments for opposing answers regarding topics such as: whether atheism threatens the value of life; differences in how the self is viewed in Western and Eastern religions; and differences in how morality is grounded in these different traditions. We will examine the compatibility of atheism with Buddhism, and of Buddhism with belief in God. (Same as PHIL 306.) Prerequisite: A 100-level Philosophy course or permission of instructor.

**REL 307. Religion in India. 3 Credits. AE42**

Survey of religious thought and practice in India from the Vedic period to the present. Formerly known as REL 507.

**REL 309. Religion in Japan. 3 Credits. GLBC**

This class is both a historical and thematic exploration of religious thought and practice in Japan from the Jomon period to the present. Readings come from a variety of sources including translations of primary documents and a full array of secondary scholarly descriptions and interpretations. Course material will also include lectures, class discussions, and a variety of visual sources. This course is offered at the 300 and 500 level with additional assignments at the 500 level. Not open to students with credit in REL 509.

**REL 310. Religion in Korea. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC**

Survey of religious thought and practice in Korea from the Three Kingdoms period to the present. Formerly known as REL 510. Not open to students with credit in REL 510.

**REL 312. Black Feminist and Womanist Ethics. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces students to Black feminist and Womanist religious scholarship, fields of study that focus on the experiences of Black women with interlocking systems of oppression in secular and sacred contexts. This class explores how racial, gendered, and economic inequities create unique burdens for Black women. Students will examine teachings of sin, sacrifice, and surrogacy and analyze how these church theologies may or may not reproduce carceral logic. We will also interrogate ethical practices that are harmful and condemn Black mothers' moral agency. Specifically, students will explore real life issues such as the criminalization of poverty and welfare reform and consider how social and ecclesial appraisals construct poor Black women as unworthy of moral concern. Students will construct helpful ways to apply liberatory Womanist religious values with abolitionist principles to shift narratives of deviance and create moral reappraisals that advocate for the flourishing of Black women beyond punishment and prisons. (Same as WGSS 312.)

**REL 314. The Black Church in America. 3 Credits.**

This course covers the "visible" church, the "invisible" church, and the Black church as an "invisible institution," and shows how agency is ascribed through the Black church. The course covers the history, heritage, roles, social and spiritual theology and dynamics of the Black church and situates the Black church within the Abrahamic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, with Africa as the beginning site for understanding the Black church and its transmigration from its African roots to the present. The class shows how the Black church developed through spiritual/sacred and hegemonic encounters, prompting the rhetorical question posed by a prominent Black church scholar: "What is African American religion?" Because of the dominant American hegemony encountered by the Black church, it must be understood as part of a larger freedom-seeking agendum that allowed its members to assert power over competing images to shape the meaning of theological allegiance, as well as the treatment of black bodies, through theology, rituals, rites, ceremonies and other religious practices. Topics covered in the course include identity through the Black church, the black conversion experience, worship styles, Black preaching, Black music, gender roles, sexuality, liberation theology, health practices, and the impact of COVID-19 on the Black church. (Same as AAAS 314.)

**REL 315. Miracles, Martyrs, and Heretics. 3 Credits. SWT AH**

A study of ancient Christian culture and religion employing the popular categories of miracles, martyrs and heretics as entry points into the basic features of religious thought and practice. Prerequisite: An undergraduate course in the humanities.

**REL 316. Ancient Magic and Witches. 3 Credits. GE3S AH**

This course provides a survey of magic and witchcraft in ancient Greece and Rome and interprets these practices through anthropological theories of magic and witchcraft. Emphasized topics may include magicians, witches, ghosts, spirits, demons, divination, and spells. This course considers issues such as how magic works, how people engage with the

divine, the marginalization of magical practitioners, and the difference between magic, witchcraft and religion. All readings will be in English; no knowledge of any ancient languages is required. (Same as CLSX 316.)

**REL 320. The Bible Then and Now. 3 Credits.**

An introduction and survey of the history and interpretation of the Jewish and Christian bibles from their first formation to the present day. Students will explore the way the text, interpretation and format of the Bible have adjusted over time to accommodate religious, political, social and technological changes. Class will occasionally meet in the university's rare book collection to study rare bibles. (Same as JWSH 320.)

**REL 322. Legal Issues and the African American. 3 Credits.**

This course examines civil issues in African-American communities and populations, and their legal ramifications. Topics such as the penal system, court sentencing, death penalty, cultural norms, law enforcement and civil liberties are critically examined within social and humanistic theories. (Same as AAAS 322.)

**REL 323. The Jewish World of Jesus. 3 Credits. GE3H**

An introduction to the figure of Jesus in his ancient Jewish context. What was Jewish life like in Jesus's time? What did the early Jesus movement share with other forms of Judaism, and how did it differ? Evidence from the New Testament, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and other textual and archaeological sources will be used to explore the first-century Jewish society of which both Jesus and the first Christians were a part. (Same as JWSH 323.)

**REL 325. Introduction to Judaism. 3 Credits.**

Analyzes a selection of the core texts, teachings, and practices of Jewish religious traditions in terms of classical and contemporary understanding. (Same as JWSH 325.)

**REL 326. The Talmud: Its Origins, Nature, and Evolution. 3 Credits.**

This course demystifies the Talmud, arguably the most central yet also the most mysterious text of rabbinic Judaism. Students are introduced to the scope, substance, styles, and major figures of the Talmud, and also learn how the text came into being over the course of several centuries. (Same as JWSH 326.) Prerequisite: REL 104, REL 107, or REL 124 or REL 125, or permission of the instructor.

**REL 327. Religious Zionisms. 3 Credits.**

A survey of the many types of Religious Zionism, from the origins of the movement to the present, from Left to Right, and from Jewish to Christian. The class asks questions about the relationship between religion and politics in Israel using case studies as examples, and also considers the views of religious Jewish anti-Zionists. No previous knowledge of Judaism or Israeli history is required. (Same as JWSH 337.)

**REL 329. Mystical Tradition in Judaism. 3 Credits.**

Mystical experiences and supernatural encounters in Jewish texts and tradition: Dybbuks and demons, angels and Elijah; from ecstatic enlightenment to succumbing to satan - Jewish texts and tradition are riddled with the arcane, the occult and the mystical. This course will mine the sources for a deep exploration of these aspects of Judaism that are most often obscured by "normative" teachings and practices, yet remain deeply embedded in the customs and beliefs of Jews around the world. (Same as JWSH 330.)

**REL 330. Native American Religions. 3 Credits. AE41 USC**

A survey of religious traditions among selected Native American peoples. Topics include religious freedom, ritual activity, cultural narrative (myth), kinship, healing practices, ecology, government relations, impact of colonization, impact of missionization, contact between cultures, and secularization.

**REL 333. Magic, Mysteries, Mummies in Ancient Egypt. 3 Credits.**

A study of ancient Egyptian culture and religion employing the popular categories of magic, mysteries and mummies as entry points into the basic features of religious belief and practice. Prerequisite: Any course in the Humanities or Social Sciences.

**REL 334. Studies in Ritual: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits.**

A study of ritual theory and a comparative study of ritual activity among selected religious traditions. May be repeated if topic varies.

**REL 339. History of Religion in America. 3 Credits.**

Survey of the development of religious institutions and ideas in America from colonial times to the present. Emphasis is given to the mainstream religious traditions (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish), but attention is also paid to other phenomena, including nonwestern and native American religions.

**REL 341. Mysticism. 3 Credits.**

The nature of mystical experience and reflection as expressed in selected mystical literature of the world's religions.

**REL 343. Christianity in Fantasy Literature. 3 Credits.**

This course explores connections between Christianity and popular culture by examining four of the most prominent modern fantasy series: The Chronicles of Narnia by C.S. Lewis, The Lord of the Rings by J.R.R. Tolkien, Harry Potter by J.K. Rowling, and His Dark Materials by Philip Pullman. Through reading, discussing, and writing about these series, we will analyze the role played by Christianity in fantasy literature and discover how various theological themes are addressed in fantasy books. We will also reflect upon the difficulties inherent in determining what makes a text "religious" and explore how the author's intentions, the audience's interpretations, and other factors figure into this determination.

**REL 345. Christianity. 3 Credits.**

An introductory examination of the history, doctrines, and practices of Christianity. Selected readings from the creeds, papal decrees, and major Christian theologians.

**REL 350. Islam. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC**

This course introduces students to Islam's Origins and historical developments, the Qur'an, the life and importance of the Prophet Muhamed, Islamic law, mysticism and sectarian divides. (Same as AAAS 349 and GIST 351.)

**REL 355. Practicing Religion in Muslim Societies. 3 Credits.**

In this course we study the role of religion in various Muslim societies throughout the world. We will consider variation in religious practice, focusing on local customs within different regions and countries and examining changes to tradition over time. We will examine the influence of history, society, politics, and culture on religion in countries such as Pakistan, Indonesia, Mali, Bosnia, Egypt, Yemen, and others. (Same as GIST 356.)

**REL 357. Women and Gender in Islam. 3 Credits. AE51 AH**

Focusing on issues of gender, this course follows major religious developments in the Islamic tradition. Also examines how Muslim women have impacted those developments. Not open to students who have taken REL 657. (Same as GIST 357.)

**REL 358. Religion, Power, and Sexuality in Arab Societies. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC**

This course examines theories of religion, discourse, power, gender and sexuality in their application to Arab societies. The course introduces different aspects of Arab cultures. Through canonical works, we study political domination, tribal social organization, honor, tribe, shame, social loyalty, ritual initiations and discuss how these issues speak generally to anthropological inquiry. Regionally specific works are then framed by

an additional set of readings drawn from anthropological, linguistics, and social theories. (Same as AAAS 372 and ANTH 372.)

**REL 360. The Buddhist Tradition in Asia. 3 Credits. AE42 GLBC**

A historical and geographical survey of the Buddhist tradition from its origins in India to modern day developments in the three major regional Buddhist cultures of Southeast Asia, Tibet, and East Asia (China, Korea, and Japan).

**REL 361. Gods and Goddesses of South Asia. 3 Credits.**

This course explores the dynamic diversity of gods and goddesses in South Asian religious life through examination of their basic iconography, religious narratives and devotional poetry, temple images and architecture, ritual practices, performance traditions, and film. Formerly known as REL 541. Not open to students with credit in REL 541.

**REL 362. Studies in Yoga & Meditation. 3 Credits.**

Historical and thematic investigation into Yoga and meditation, including classical formulations, esoteric practices, and contemporary developments and debates.

**REL 365. Hinduism. 3 Credits.**

An introduction to the diversity and richness of Hinduism from the Vedic period to the present; explores Hindu practices, beliefs, and communities using primary texts and extensive audio-visual resources.

**REL 370. Judaism and Sexuality. 3 Credits.**

An exploration of the complex interactions of Judaism, Jewishness, and sexuality. The course serves as a basic introduction to traditional Jewish understandings of gender and power, love and sex, and the body and embodiment. It also introduces the changes undergone by this tradition under the impact of contemporary feminism and queer theory.

**REL 372. Religion and the Environment in the United States. 3 Credits. AE41**

This class examines the variety of ways religious and environmental attitudes intersect in US culture, and how religious traditions can be (and have been) used both to alienate people from the environment and to foster an ethic of environmental responsibility. The course will focus on appreciating the diversity within and across religious traditions when it comes to attitudes on the environment, and understanding the different contexts and assumptions that lead to such diversity. Amidst all this diversity, similarities will also be noted in how people from all different backgrounds are drawing on the resources of their religious traditions to promote more sustainable ways of being. (Same as EVRN 372.)

**REL 374. Religious Perspectives on Selfhood and Sexuality. 3 Credits.**

The nature of the self in its individual and social dimensions. Self experienced and expressed in sexuality. Survey of viewpoints in religious literature.

**REL 379. Prophets and Profits. 3 Credits. AE51 AH**

The course will examine what religious traditions have had to say about controversies in economic ethics, focusing on how religious thinkers develop arguments on the basis of methods particular to their traditions. At the same time, it presents these traditions alongside secular approaches to economic ethics. Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism will be considered, as will liberalism, Marxism, feminism, and natural law theory. Topics include economic inequality, wealth accumulation, licit and illicit commerce, slavery, and profit. Attention will also be paid to the methodological challenges of the study of the topic, which necessarily brings together political economy, ethics, economic history, and hermeneutics. Students will work with a diverse array of primary sources, from ancient scriptures to modern thinkers. The ultimate goal will be to understand how it is possible for thinkers within the same religious tradition to take differing stances on economic ethics, while

considering themselves wholly grounded in tradition, depending on their relationships to the modern secular approaches we discuss. (Same as JWSH 379.)

**REL 380. Philosophical Issues in Religion. 3 Credits. GE3H AH**  
This course will consider, from a philosophical perspective, some of the problems in religion which arise in the development of "Natural Theology" broadly conceived. (Same as PHIL 350.)

**REL 381. Religions, Epidemics, & Pandemics. 3 Credits.**  
This course looks at the relationship between religion and medicine with a focus on epidemics and pandemics throughout Western history. The course objective is to prepare the student to summarize, discuss, illustrate, and evaluate the history of religious thought and practice in relation to the history of medicine. It surveys the ancient to the modern period with a focus on the great epidemics. Topics and case studies include priestly medicine in ancient societies, modern medicine, religious responses to disease and medicine, ancient plagues and epidemics, the Black Death, the flu pandemic of 1918-1920, and the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

**REL 400. Study Abroad Special Topics: \_\_\_\_\_. 1-4 Credits.**  
This course is designed for the study of special topics in Religious Studies equivalent to courses at the 300 to 600 level at KU. Coursework must be arranged through the Office of KU Study Abroad. May be repeated for credit if content varies.

**REL 404. Undergraduate Seminar in Religion: \_\_\_\_\_. 1-3 Credits.**  
Topic, instructor, prerequisite and hours of credit to be announced in Schedule of Classes. Particular subject matter any given semester responding to student interest and taking advantage of special faculty competence. Class discussion, readings, and individual projects.

**REL 405. Directed Study in Religion. 1-4 Credits. AE61 CAP**  
Investigation of a special topic or project selected by the student with advice, approval, and supervision of an instructor. Such study may take the form of directed reading or special research. Individual reports and conferences. May be repeated, with maximum cumulative credit of four hours. Course taken for one hour of credit may not be used to fulfill College distribution requirement. Prerequisite: One previous course in religious studies at the University of Kansas and permission of instructor.

**REL 450. Popular Culture in the Muslim World. 3 Credits.**  
A study of pop songs, television, comics, and other idioms of popular culture from different parts of the Muslim world, with attention to Muslims' sense of humor, tragedy, aesthetics, and pertinent issues of the day. (Same as AAAS 450.)

**REL 477. Gender and Religion. 3 Credits.**  
Examination of the symbols, images, scriptures, rites and teachings that define gender in various religious traditions. (Same as HUM 477 and WGSS 477.) Prerequisite: An introductory course in Humanities, Religious Studies or Women, Gender & Sexuality Studies.

**REL 484. Magic, Science, and Religion. 3 Credits. GE3S**  
This course provides a comparative study of religion and systems of value and belief in non-Western cultures. (Same as ANTH 484.)

**REL 490. Capstone in Religious Studies: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits. AE61**  
A capstone course for religious studies majors to survey theories and methods in religious studies and produce original research. Students will engage readings on the theories and methods in religious studies and then conduct research on a question within the parameters of the topic of the course. They will write a research paper that integrates subject knowledge with a particular theory or method to generate new ideas. May be repeated for credit if content varies. Prerequisite: Religious Studies major or permission of the instructor.

**REL 499. Undergraduate Honors Research. 1-3 Credits. AE61 CAP**

Required for Departmental Honors. May be taken more than once; total credit not to exceed 6 hours. Prerequisite: Open only to candidates for degree with departmental honors and with consent of the student's research supervisor.

**REL 500. Readings in Non-English Religious Texts. 1-4 Credits.**  
This course provides directed readings for students in either primary or secondary texts related to religious studies utilizing material in languages other than English.

**REL 509. Religion in Japan. 3 Credits. AE42**  
Survey of religious thought and practice in Japan from the Jomon period to the present. This course is offered at the 300 and 500 level with additional assignments at the 500 level. Not open to students with credit in REL 309. (Same as EALC 509.) Prerequisite: One course on Religious Studies or East Asian Languages & Cultures.

**REL 511. Buddhist Art of Korea. 3 Credits.**  
Introduction to the history of Buddhist temple buildings, paintings, sculptures and illuminated hand-scrolls in Korea from the 4th through the 19th centuries, with special emphasis on their stylistic, geographical, social, devotional and literary contexts. Current theories and controversies pertinent to the history and study of Korean Buddhist art are also addressed. Not open to students who have taken HA 361. Work requirements will be greater for students enrolled at the 500 level than at the 300 level. (Same as HA 561.) Prerequisite: A college level introduction to Asian art history, or consent of instructor.

**REL 525. Jews and Christians. 3 Credits.**  
This course examines the ways Jews and Christians have interacted with and characterized one another at various points in their histories. Special emphasis is placed on the gradual separation of the two religious traditions in the 1st-4th centuries. Prerequisite: A previous course in Religious Studies or Jewish Studies; or consent of instructor.

**REL 572. Judaism and Political Theology. 3 Credits.**  
A consideration of the relationship between religion and politics in Judaism, and of the relevance of Judaism to broader discussions about religion and politics. Topics will include sovereignty, secularization, pluralism, democracy, and revolution. (Same as JWSH 562.) Prerequisite: At least one course in Jewish Studies or Religious Studies, or permission of instructor.

**REL 657. Women and Gender in Islam. 3 Credits.**  
Focusing on issues of gender, this course follows major religious developments in the Islamic tradition. Also examines how Muslim women have impacted those developments. (Not open to students who have taken REL 357.) (Same as AAAS 657.) Prerequisite: AAAS 349/REL 350, graduate standing, or permission of instructor.

**REL 701. Approaches to the Study of Religion. 3 Credits.**  
An introduction to the various methods by which social scientists, historians, philosophers, and theologians study the meaning, influence, and significance of religion as an integral part of society and its cultural heritage. Prerequisite: Graduate student or permission of instructor.

**REL 704. Russian Orthodoxy in Historical Perspective. 3 Credits.**  
This course examines Russian Orthodoxy as a religious system and the institution of the Russian Orthodox Church from its first appearance in Russia to the present. It focuses on beliefs and practices of the clergy and laity; institutional structures; the relationships between Church and State; interactions with non-Orthodox religious communities; responses to Soviet atheist policies; Orthodox influences on political theory, philosophy, literature, and the fine arts. (Same as REES 704.)

**REL 724. Magic and Myth in Ancient Egypt. 3 Credits.**

A study of the basic features of ancient Egyptian culture and religion, with an emphasis on magic, myth and archaeology. Prerequisite: An introductory course in Religious Studies or consent of instructor.

**REL 731. Studies in Christianity. 3 Credits.**

Study of religious thought, practice, and institutions of Christianity with an emphasis on the examination of primary documents.

**REL 734. Studies in Ritual: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits.**

A study of ritual theory and a comparative study of ritual activity among selected religious traditions. May be taken more than once if topic varies.

**REL 761. Seminar in Western Religious Thought: \_\_\_\_\_. 3 Credits.**

An analysis of the thought of selected thinkers of the Christian, Jewish, and/or Islamic traditions. May be taken more than once if subject matter varies sufficiently. Prerequisite: REL 512 or REL 539 or permission of the instructor.

**REL 800. Readings. 1-4 Credits.**

**REL 827. Seminar in Religion, Text and Textuality. 3 Credits.**

This seminar explores issues surrounding the production and use of authoritative religious texts (sacred texts) in religious traditions, including such topics as scripturality and canon, scriptural hermeneutics, and material and ritual dimensions of scriptural practice. Specific case studies and content to be selected by the instructor.

**REL 847. Seminar in Religion, Society and Social Change. 3 Credits.**

This seminar explores issues regarding the social dimensions of religiosity/lived religion, ranging from aspects of religious institutionalization, authority, and normativity to alternative religiosities and alterity. Specific case studies and content to be selected by the instructor.

**REL 899. Thesis. 1-3 Credits.**