**RLGN (RLGN)**

**RLGN 102. Introduction to the Study of Religion. 3 Units.**
Introduction to the academic study of religion and of the religious dimensions of life. Open to all students but prerequisite for majors and minors in religious studies. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 108. The History of Yoga: The Yoga of Transformation and the Transformation of Yoga. 3 Units.**
In this class we will investigate the history and context of yoga. We will first examine yoga as a transformative disciplined practice through close study of primary sources. Next we will focus on Yoga as presented in Patanjali’s Yoga Sutras. We will then examine the ways and extent to which yoga has been transformed in both India and outside of India. To this end we will scrutinize the development of American(ized) “Yoga.” We will address the legal complexities concerning ownership and appropriation as well as those concerning the teaching of “Yoga” in public schools and the establishment clause of the First Amendment. We will also devote several classes to actual yoga experiences where the students can learn some asana (postures) and movements. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 151. Introducing Africana Religions. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Africana Religions. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in religions of people of African origins in sub-Saharan African, the Caribbean, Europe, and the Americas and thus will explore forms of these traditions in a diversity of cultural contexts. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Introducing Africana Religions: The Black Church in the U.S., Introducing Africana Religions: Yoruba Ifa Traditions, Introducing Africana Religions: Orisha Traditions in Latin America and the Caribbean, Introducing Africana Religions: African American Religious, Introducing Africana Religions: U.S. African-derived Religions. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 152. Introducing Buddhism. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Buddhism. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Buddhist tradition, exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts in Japan and throughout the world. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Buddhist Ethics, Buddhist Theory of Mind, The Sutras. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 153. Introducing Chinese Religions. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Chinese religions. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and a basic religious literacy in the nuances and complexities in Chinese religions within various historical and socio-cultural contexts. Section topics might include, but are not limited to: Confucianism, Daoism, Chinese Buddhism, Gender and Sexuality in Chinese Religions. Students may repeat the course for credit once (two times total for 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Offered as RLGN 153, ETHS 153 and CHIN 253. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 154. Introducing Hinduism. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Hinduism. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Hinduism, exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: The Epics, Ritual, Contemporary Practices. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 155. Introducing Jainism. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Jainism. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Jainism exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Epic and Narratives, Ritual, Contemporary Issues. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 171. Introducing Christianity. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Christianity. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and a basic religious literacy in Christianity, exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts throughout the world. Section topics might include, but are not limited to: The Black Church, The Apocalyptic Imagination, Latin American Liberation Theology. Students may repeat the course for credit once (two times total for 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

**RLGN 172. Introducing Islam. 3 Units.**
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of the beliefs, practices, sacred texts, and intellectual traditions of Islam. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Islamic tradition, including investigations into how Muslim institutions developed in relation to diverse socioeconomic and cultural conditions, including Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, and Europe. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Women and Gender, Faith, Politics, and Modernity, Pilgrimages, Prophecy, and Sacred Places. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.
RLGN 173. Introducing Judaism. 3 Units.
This “topics” course offers an introduction to the academic study of Judaism. Whether approached through a particular theme or as a general historical introduction, each section of this course provides students with a general introduction to the academic study of religion and basic religious literacy in Jewish religious tradition, exploring forms of it in a diversity of cultural contexts around the world. Section topics could include, but are not limited to: Festivals and Holy Days, Women and Gender, Jewish Ethics. Students may repeat the course for credit (up to 6 credits), provided that the two sections are different. Offered as RLGN 173 and JDST 173. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 191. Introduction to Sanskrit. 3 Units.
This class is an introduction to Sanskrit language and culture. Students will learn basic Sanskrit grammar and syntax, both of which are inextricably linked to the culture of ancient South Asia. There are no prerequisites and the course does not presuppose any familiarity with India or Indian languages. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 201. Interpreting Religion: Approaches and Current Issues. 3 Units.
Introduction to academic study of religion, exploring the history and development of the field, important theories and methodologies, and current issues, debates, and horizons of research. The course is foundational for majors and minors in religious studies but also open to other interested students who may find it valuable for their work in other fields of study. Particular readings and other assignments will be determined by the designated instructor. Students are expected to attend class regularly, complete readings and other assignments, and participate actively in class discussions and other activities.

RLGN 203. Religious Studies for Future Healthcare Professionals. 3 Units.
This class will provide future healthcare professionals with the basic knowledge of religious studies and of topics pertaining to death and dying, sickness, suffering, and so on. Students will also gain a basic knowledge of related bioethical issues as they are found in the world’s religions. The primary aim of the course is to offer future healthcare professionals an awareness of the diverse religious backgrounds of patients and issues that they might encounter and to provide a basic understanding of religious studies in the process. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 204. Introduction to Asian Religions. 3 Units.
Principal Asian religious traditions based on a study of classical sources. Classical Chinese thought, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Readings include selections from the works of Confucius, Mencius, Mo Tzu, Lao Tzu, Chuang Tzu, the Mahabharata, the Bhagavad Gita, and the early Buddhist canon. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 205. Catholic Imagination: Global Perspectives. 3 Units.
This course introduces students to the diversity and plurality within the Catholic tradition as a world religion. It focuses attention on the global perspectives of Catholicism in recognition of the fact that more than two-thirds of the world’s Catholic population today are from the Global South or the Majority World. It will explore the challenges posed by, and the possibilities offered by studying the Catholic imagination as expressed in diverse and pluralistic forms through both historical experiences and contemporary perspectives. Students will also investigate the impact and implications of missionary expansion, religious reception, colonialism and imperialism, globalization, migration, transnationalism, postcolonialism, and multiple belonging on the transformation of Catholicism from a Eurocentric religious tradition to a truly globalized world religion. Students will also consider how subaltern and minoritized Catholics’ embrace of traditioning is reshaping traditional understandings of the Catholic imagination. Students will gain familiarity with how the central themes of the Catholic imagination are expressed in different ethnic, social, and cultural contexts around the world and appreciate the complexities of, and understand the implications arising from the global, transnational, and postcolonial dimensions of the Catholic imagination. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 206. Religion and Ecology. 3 Units.
Historical and cross-cultural introduction to religious perspectives on nature and ecology, including Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist, and Native American texts and ritual practices. Themes include: ecology of chaos and complexity, urban ecology, wilderness, and ecological crises. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 208. Introduction to Western Religions. 3 Units.
Basic introduction to the three great monotheistic religions of the Western World: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. All three of these religious traditions trace their roots to the faith of biblical Israel as revealed by a series of prophets including Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Each absorbed the philosophy and science of the Greco-Roman world and went on both to influence and struggle with each other. Many of the religious problems of the contemporary world, from Afghanistan to the Middle East to Yugoslavia, can be traced to tension within and between these religious groups. Offered as RLGN 208 and JDST 208. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 209. Introduction to Biblical Literature. 3 Units.
This course is an introduction to the academic study of biblical literature, including Hebrew Scriptures (“Old Testament”) and the New Testament. The literature will be studied in light of both ancient and contemporary historical contexts, with a particular emphasis on the roles it plays in American culture and politics today. Class sessions will be discussion oriented and will involve close, careful analysis and interpretation of texts. No background in religion is necessary. Evaluation will be based on class preparation and participation, regular short writing assignments, two exams, and a major paper.
RLGN 211. Great Books of Western Religion. 3 Units.
Students will engage with the major writings that have shaped Western religious traditions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) from their earliest expressions until the present day. Readings include the foundational Scriptures (Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Quran) of each tradition, religious poetry and other writings from the Middle Ages, and modern writers on spirituality and religiousness within each of these traditions. The course will be conducted as a seminar, in which students will read the selected original texts and will discuss their religious and spiritual meaning and significance in class. Each student will also prepare a final project based on the assigned authors or readings. Offered as RLGN 211 and JDST 211.

RLGN 212. Introduction to Christianity. 3 Units.
An introduction to the history, thought and culture of Christianity and its diverse traditions. Course will include field research with local Christian religious institutions.

RLGN 213. Jews and Judaism. 3 Units.
This course provides an introduction to Jewish religion, culture, history, and life. It does not presuppose any previous study of Judaism or experience with Judaism, and it prepares students for additional coursework in Judaic studies, Jewish history, or religious studies with an emphasis on Judaism. Required for the minor in Judaic Studies. Offered as JDST 101 and RLGN 213. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 214. Introduction to Islam. 3 Units.
This course is an introduction to the beliefs, practices, sacred texts, and intellectual traditions of Islam. We will approach the many dimensions of Islam from the perspectives of religious studies. Our goal is to develop a foundational understanding of the core aspects of Islam, while critically analyzing how these features have been understood in Western academic discourse. Throughout the term, we will examine major developments in the history of Islam, underscoring the dynamic changes that the tradition has undergone in its 1400+ year history. We will also investigate how Muslim institutions developed in relation to diverse socioeconomic and cultural conditions, including Africa, the Americas, the Middle East, and Europe. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 215. Religion in America. 3 Units.
This course is an introduction to American religions, with a particular focus on religious diversity in the United States. As we examine the myriad beliefs and practices of America’s religious communities, we will pay close attention to how religion and culture have shaped each other from the 1600’s to today. To explore the theme of religious diversity, we will take advantage of Cleveland’s rich religious history with visits to local religious institutions and historical sites, including churches, mosques, synagogues and Hindu and Buddhist temples. Along the way we will consider the role of religious spaces and institutions in shaping community, identity, and politics in Northeast Ohio and beyond. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 216. Hinduism I: The Vedic, Epic and Puranic Periods. 3 Units.
This course will provide an introduction to the Vedic, Epic and Puranic periods in the development of Hinduism. We will read a range of primary sources produced during these times. These texts were composed between 1500 BCE and the 5th century CE. The course has an emphasis on research and writing. We will not be examining contemporary issues or practice. The goal of the class is to gain detailed understanding of the kind of world(s) that were envisioned in these forms of early "Hinduism."

RLGN 217. Buddhism. 3 Units.
Buddhism is an important world religion that originated in India around 500 BCE. Subsequently, Buddhism spread to Central and East Asia. More recently, Buddhist traditions have been established in Europe and North America. Like Christianity and Islam, Buddhism is considered a "missionary" religion because its message has been actively propagated in cultural contexts outside its place of origin. Buddhist ideas and concepts have not only inspired religious practice, but have often provided the foundation for political, social, ethical, literary, artistic and other modes of cultural expression. It is, therefore, difficult to understand those Asian cultures in which Buddhism is or has been important without understanding this religious tradition itself. This course examines concepts, symbols, and institutions central to Buddhist religious practice throughout its 2500 year history. We will focus on the Theravada and Mahayana Buddhist traditions as they developed in India, on the development of Pure Land and Zen traditions in China and Japan, and on Tibetan Buddhist traditions. We will also consider Buddhist perspectives on contemporary ethical issues. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 218. Faith and Politics in Islam. 3 Units.
An overview of the relationship between Islam as a religion and Islam as a political system and the effect of this relationship on Islamic society from its origin to the present time. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 219. Islam in America. 3 Units.
The United States is home to one of the most diverse Muslim communities in the world. Using a variety of primary and secondary sources, this course examines the rich history of Islam in the United States, from the 18th century to the present, as it relates to key moments within American politics, religion and culture, and to transnational developments in Islamic thought and practice. We will also explore important issues within contemporary Muslim communities, including gender, shari’a, and religious pluralism. In addition to studying the experiences of Muslim immigrants, students will also investigate the vital role of African-American Muslims and converts in the development of American Muslim institutions, beliefs and rituals. This course will also introduce students to the history of Islam in Cleveland, and provide them with the opportunity to contribute to original research on Muslim communities in our city. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 221. Indian Philosophy. 3 Units.
We will survey the origins of Indian philosophical thought, with an emphasis on early Buddhist, Hindu and Jain literature. Our concern will be the methods, presuppositions, arguments, and goals of these schools and trajectories of thought. What were their theories on the nature of the person, the nature of reality, and the nature and process of knowing? What were the debates between the schools and the major points of controversy? And, most importantly, are the positions/arguments internally incoherent? Offered as PHIL 221 and RLGN 221. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 222. African-American Religions. 3 Units.
This course is an exploration of the rich diversity of African American religions from the colonial period to the present. Attention will be given to key figures, institutional expressions, and significant movements in African American religious history. Major themes include African traditions in American religions, slavery and religion, sacred music, social protest, Black Nationalism in religion, Islam, African American women and religion, and black and womanist theologies. Course requirements will include field trips to local religious sites. Offered as ETHS 222 and RLGN 222.
RLGN 223. Religious Roots of Conflict in the Middle East. 3 Units.
The course is about the rhetoric and symbols used by various voices in the Middle East in the ongoing debate about the future shape of the region. For historical and cultural reasons, much of the discourse draws on religious symbolism, especially (although not exclusively) Islamic, Jewish and Christian. Because of the long and complex history of the region and the religious communities in it, virtually every act and every place is fraught with meaning. The course examines the diverse symbols and rhetorical strategies used by the various sides in the conflict and how they are understood both by various audiences within each community and among the different communities. Offered as JDST 223 and RLGN 223. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 224. The Many Faces of Contemporary U.S. Catholicism. 3 Units.
This course explores the implications of immigration and changing demographics on the contemporary U.S. Catholic Church. The course investigates the diverse racial and ethnic communities that increasingly define U.S. Catholicism and includes a particular focus on African and African Americans, Latina/o/s, and Asian Americans. Attention will be given to the intersections of faith, ethnicity, race, and identity constructions in contemporary U.S. Catholicism, as well as issues of racism and racial justice in the U.S. Catholic Church and other social, cultural, and political dynamics that are shaping and transforming contemporary Catholic identities in the United States. Offered as ETHS 224 and RLGN 224. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 227. Women, Gender, and Islam. 3 Units.
Women and gender are central to understanding Muslim societies, past and present. From debates about the veil to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, gendered concerns have been especially prominent in contemporary debates about the status of Islam in the modern world. How have Muslim thinkers interpreted Islamic scriptures with respect to topics such as marriage, child custody, inheritance, and sexuality? How is masculinity and femininity constructed? In what ways do their interpretations reflect the political, economic, and social conditions in which they lived? How does gender structure authority and power in Muslim communities? How and why have Muslim women become so important in contemporary debates over religious and national identity around the world? This course begins by examining the position of women and gender in the foundational Islamic texts, the Qur'an and Sunna (the practice of the Prophet Muhammad), and pre-modern interpretations of them. Then we will explore marriage and divorce in Muslim jurisprudence, in order to examine themes such as women's spiritual capacities, female leadership, sexuality, and slavery. Next, we will turn to the headscarf as a lens though which to explore modern configurations of gender and sexuality, as they intersect with conceptions of national belonging, religious identity, and individual freedom. Finally, we will study contemporary debates over polygyny, homosexuality, and female religious authority. There are no prerequisites for this course. No prior knowledge of Islam is expected. Offered as RLGN 227 and WGST 227. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 229. Asian Christianity: Historical Perspectives. 3 Units.
The history of Christianity in Asia is as old as the history of Christianity itself. But while much has been told about Christianity as it grew from an obscure Jewish sect to mighty Western Christendom, not enough attention has been given to the Christianity which spread eastwards to Asia in the first millennium of the Christian era. This course seeks to correct the imbalance by introducing students to a historical exploration of the eastward movement of Christianity from Jerusalem to different parts of Asia. Topics include the Assyrian Church of the East in Persia, India and China, European Catholic and Protestant colonial missions in the age of European imperialism, and the Jesuit missions to Japan and China. By the end of the semester, students should have a good grasp of the historical encounter of Christianity with the political, social, cultural and religious realities of Asia. Its dialogue and confrontation with these realities and the forces that led to its growth and decline. Offered as HSTY 229 and RLGN 229. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 232. DESI: Diaspora, Ethnicity, Southasia(n), Integrate. 3 Units.
In this class we will interrogate the cultural identity(ies) and imagined community(ies) of the "South Asian" Diaspora. We will first examine taxonomy and categorization itself, as a methodological, philosophical, and political enterprise. We will then examine how such contrived categories have been applied to the so-called desis, loosely and broadly understood as members of the South Asian Diaspora. To this end we will scrutinize the development of American(ized) "Hinduism." the imagined location that desis have in North American racial and ethnic hierarchies, and the construction of assimilated, enculturated, and transnational imagined desi communities. Offered as RLGN 232 and ETHS 232. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 233. Introduction to Jewish Folklore. 3 Units.
Exploration of a variety of genres, research methods and interpretations of Jewish folklore, from antiquity to the present. Emphasis on how Jewish folk traditions and culture give us access to the spirit and mentality of the many different generations of the Jewish ethnic group, illuminating its past and informing the direction of its future development. Offered as ANTH 233, RLGN 233, and JDST 233. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 235. Religion and Visual Culture. 3 Units.
Cross-cultural introduction to complex relations between religion and seeing. Study of visual culture, sacred iconography, calligraphy, film, mass media, and avant-garde fashion. Extensive use of cultural resources in University Circle.

RLGN 237. Religion and Dance in South Asia. 3 Units.
This is an experimental interdisciplinary course in religion, dance, and South Asian studies. We will explore the performance of religion in bharata natyam, one storytelling dance form from South Asia. This dance style draws upon Hindu devotional (bhakti) allegories of sacred and profane love in its choreography. Lover and beloved, as the ideal relationship between God and the human, becomes the model for the performed relationship between heroes and heroines (nayaka-nayaki) danced on stages and, more recently, Bollywood screens. To this end we will examine primary and secondary sources on bharata natyam and aesthetic theory/classical dramatics. We will also observe dance performances in the greater Cleveland area. Offered as RLGN 237 and DANC 237.
RLGN 238. Alternative Altars: Folk Religion in America. 3 Units.
Taking a multidisciplinary approach, students will become familiar with the distinction between conventional and unconventional religions, with the history and personalities associated with new belief systems in America, and with the means, motivations and methods of generating faith communities. Students will come to understand the role of cultural anxieties, new technologies, changing roles, globalization and other social tensions in the formation and duration of alternative altars. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 240. The Heavens in Religion and Science. 3 Units.
Review of the relationships between scientific descriptions of the natural world and the religious and ethical implications drawn from those in Western civilizations. Introduction to the close cooperation between religion and science in the West until the modern period and review of the breakdown of that relationship in the past 200 years. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar.

RLGN 251. Perspectives in Ethnicity, Race, Religion and Gender. 3 Units.
This course is designed to introduce students to the study of ethnicity. Basic concepts such as race, gender, class, and identity construction will be examined. Students are encouraged to use the tools and perspectives of several disciplines to address the experiences of ethnic groups in the United States. Offered as ETHS 251 and RLGN 251. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 254. The Holocaust. 3 Units.
This class seeks to answer fundamental questions about the Holocaust: the German-led organized mass murder of nearly six million Jews and millions of other ethnic and religious minorities. It will investigate the origins and development of racism in modern European society, the manifestations of that racism, and responses to persecution. An additional focus of the course will be comparisons between different groups, different countries, and different phases during the Nazi era. Offered as HSTY 254, RLGN 254, ETHS 254, and JDST 254. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 260. Introduction to the Qur’an. 3 Units.
This course is an introduction to the Qur’an. For Muslims, the Qur’an is the inimitable word of God, and its influence has been both far-reaching and profound in various historical contexts. It introduces students to the text of the Qur’an, in English translation, providing a window into both Muslim interpretations of their scripture (from the early days of Islam to the present) and academic studies of the text. Students will approach the Qur’an as a living document, as text that is continually re-visited and re-interpreted by Muslims, and used in various ritual contexts and in daily life. This course will explore theological and legal dimensions of the Qur’an, touching on issues of God's nature, Islamic ethics, the foundations of Islamic law, and gender roles. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 265. Malcolm and Martin. 3 Units.
An examination of the lives, religious thought, and ideological frameworks of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King, Jr. The course will investigate Malcolm X and Martin King's religious beliefs and activist strategies; the ideas and strategies of other civil rights and Black Nationalist leaders who influenced and challenged Martin and Malcolm's ideas on race, gender, class, and sexuality; and the historical antecedents for these strategies within nineteenth-century black religious, social, and political movements. Their impact on modern African American religious thought, American political culture, and international human rights movements will also be explored. Offered as ETHS 265 and RLGN 265. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 268. Women in the Bible: Ethnographic Approaches to Rite and Ritual, Story, Song, and Art. 3 Units.
Examination of women in Jewish and Christian Biblical texts, along with their Jewish, Christian (and occasionally Muslim) interpretations. Discussion of how these traditions have shaped images of, and attitudes toward, women in western civilization. Offered as RLGN 268, WGST 268, and JDST 268.

RLGN 270. Introduction to Gender Studies. 3 Units.
This course introduces women and men students to the methods and concepts of gender studies, women's studies, and feminist theory. An interdisciplinary course, it covers approaches used in literary criticism, history, philosophy, political science, sociology, anthropology, psychology, film studies, cultural studies, art history, and religion. It is the required introductory course for students taking the women’s and gender studies major. Offered as ENGL 270, HSTY 270, PHIL 270, RLGN 270, SOCI 201, and WGST 201. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement. Prereq: ENGL 150 or passing letter grade in a 100 level first year seminar in FSCC, FSNA, FSSO, FSSY, FSTS, or FSCS.

RLGN 272. Morality and Mind. 3 Units.
Recent research in cognitive science challenges ethical perspectives founded on the assumption that rationality is key to moral knowledge or that morality is the product of divine revelation. Bedrock moral concepts like free will, rights, and moral agency also have been questioned. In light of such critiques, how can we best understand moral philosophy and religious ethics? Is ethics primarily informed by nature or by culture? Or is ethics informed by both? This course examines 1) ways in which cognitive science—and related fields such as evolutionary biology—impact traditional moral perspectives, and 2) how the study of moral philosophy and comparative ethics forces reconsideration of broad cognitive science theories about the nature of ethics. The course examines the concept of free will as a case study in applying these interpretive viewpoints. Interdisciplinary readings include literature from moral philosophy, religious ethics, cognitive science, and evolutionary biology. Offered as COGS 272 and RLGN 272.

RLGN 273. Religion and Healing in the United States. 3 Units.
A cross-cultural exploration of the relationships between religion, health and healing in the United States. Through an interdisciplinary approach that includes religious studies, medical anthropology and ethnic/gender studies, the course investigates how persons interpret illness and suffering. Attention is also paid to how different groups utilized, or are served by, the health care system. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 278. Religion and Popular Culture. 3 Units.
How does religion function when it shows up in popular culture? How does popular culture influence and help shape religion? This "topics" course explores the interactions between religion and popular culture in contemporary society. Each section will focus on visual, kinetic, aural, haptic or literary "texts" that may include musical production, dance, film and television, social media, sports, video, visual and textile arts, traditional fiction or graphic novels. The course examines how religious traditions, symbols or concepts are evoked in popular cultural texts and how these texts create meaning and help shape individual and communal identity. Each section will examine themes and issues that may include: gender, race, and sexuality; protest and activism, commercialism and consumerism; power and identity; ethics and morality; experience and embodiment; and constructions of evil, salvation, and transcendence. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.
RLGN 280. Religion and Politics in the Middle East. 3 Units.
An in-depth look at the relationship between politics and religion in the Middle East. Students will spend the first week on the CWRU campus and the last three weeks in Israel, where time will be divided between classroom teaching, guest lectures, and “field trips” to important sites. Students will have the opportunity to interact directly with members of the region’s diverse religious groups within the political, social, and cultural contexts in which they live. A final research paper will be required. Knowledge of Hebrew is not necessary. Offered as JDST 280 and RLGN 280.

RLGN 283. Muhammad: The Man and the Prophet. 3 Units.
The life of the Prophet Muhammad (c.470-632 CE) which was as crucial to the unfolding Islamic ideal as it is today. An examination of how he attempted to bring peace to war-torn Arabia by evolving an entirely new perspective of the human situation, guidance for human lives, and humans’ relationship with God. The course will include Western perceptions of Islam, especially in light of September 11, 2001.

RLGN 284. Jesus Through Islamic Lens. 3 Units.
Christians are often surprised when they hear Muslims say, "We believe in Jesus too, and we hold him in great esteem." But what do they really mean? Are the Muslim Jesus and the Christian Jesus the same person? The primarily aim of this course is to introduce an image of Jesus little known outside the Arabic Islamic culture. It is an image that might be of interest to those who wish to understand how Jesus was perceived by a religious tradition which greatly revered him but rejected his divinity. Hence, the Jesus presented in this course will be similar in some ways to the Jesus in the Christian Gospels, in others not. Why and how this Muslim tradition of Jesus arose will be also discussed in this course. Jesus Through Islamic Lens will draw from various Islamic texts to provide a comprehensive selection of excerpts pertaining to the life and moral teachings of Jesus. Approaching Christ from an Islamic perspective, this course will offer the students a rare opportunity to understand the significance of Jesus in Islam and to gain a better understanding of the faith, not only as it contrasts with Christianity but also as it compares. In this course we will try to respond to these questions: What role does Jesus have in Islam? What does the Quran say about Him? What does it not say? Why are Muslims repulsed by the idea that Jesus is the Son of God, fully God and fully man? What do Muslims have in mind when they acknowledge Jesus as virgín-born? This course also requires reading literature that pertains to the history of Islam, its theology and its culture, and because of its emphasis on an area of the world historically distinct from the West (or European culture), the course will fulfill the Global and Cultural Diversity requirement. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 301. Ritual in Religion. 3 Units.
Drawing from a broad range of approaches and academic fields, this seminar offers an introduction to the study of ritual. The course has three main goals: (1) to help students become familiar with important theories of and approaches to ritual studies; (2) to explore a number of ritual practices from different cultures, from ancient priestly rites in the Bible to contemporary cockfights in Bali; and (3) to study and discuss several representations of ritual in contemporary literature and film. Offered as RLGN 301 and RLGN 403.

RLGN 302. The Lemonade Class: Religion, Race, Sex and Black Music. 3 Units.
Charles Long suggests that black musical forms are creative responses to the particular circumstances of black peoples’ presence in the U.S and black notions of the sacred. In April of 2016, Beyoncé released her visual album Lemonade two days after the death of Prince. This course is organized around the album’s title cuts and links these two artists together in an examination of religion and musical performance as creative response to the racial and gendered conditions of black life. The course investigates how both artists have used music as a platform to explore issues of race, gender, commerce, sexuality, power and divinity. The course also looks at examples from the works of earlier artists who address similar themes such as Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Muddy Waters, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Little Richard, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, and Aretha Franklin. Offered as ETHS 302, MUHI 316, RLGN 302, RLGN 402, and WGST 302. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 304. Representations of Black Women and Religion in Film. 3 Units.
In this course we will explore cinematic representations of black women and religion in film. Each week we will view a film in class. We will begin the class with the film Imitation of Life and then the course with The Help. Throughout the course we will analyze the ways in which notations of gender, sexuality, intimate violence, and modern notions of race and color, have informed representations of black women and religion in film. In addition, we will discuss how these representations, in turn, have influenced cultural ideas about black women in the Americas. Offered as RLGN 304, RLGN 404, WGST 304, and ETHS 304. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 306. Interpreting Buddhist Texts. 3 Units.
Readings in translation of major texts from the Buddhist tradition. Special emphasis on problems of textual interpretation, historical context, Buddhist conceptions of the sacred, and Buddhist ethics.

RLGN 307. Body, Health and Medicine in Chinese Religions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. 3 Units.
This course critically evaluates the history and development of traditional Chinese approaches to health and medicine in the context of Chinese religious, philosophical, and socio-cultural history. It examines the constructions of the body in Chinese religious and philosophical thought across different historical periods and evaluates their significance and implications for understanding Chinese approaches to health and medicine. It discusses the conceptions of “health” and “good health” in ancient China, the distinction between “healing” and “curing,” the development of the complementary yin-yang and five phases (wuxing) theories, understandings of nature (xing) and body (ti), the concept of qi as life force, and various microcosm-macrocosm analogies that emerged from Chinese religious and philosophical traditions. It explores how these religious and philosophical frameworks, beginning with the Daoist classic, Basic Questions in the Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi Neijing Suwen) have evolved to undergird the development of diet, acupuncture, moxibustion, meditation, and various alchemical practices within Chinese holistic conceptions of health and practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Offered as RLGN 307, RLGN 407, CHIN 307, HSTY 308, and ETHS 307. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.
RLGN 308. Daoism: Visual Culture, History and Practice. 3 Units.
This course explores developments in the visual culture, history and practices of Daoist religious traditions in China from the third to twentieth centuries. Our historically and conceptually structured examination draws upon a balance of visual, textual, and material sources, while considering the various approaches scholars have employed to understand the history and development of Daoist traditions. Topics include: sacred scriptures and liturgies, biographies and visual narratives, iconography and functions of the pantheon of gods and immortals, views of the self and the body, practices of inner alchemy and self-cultivation, thunder deities and exorcism, dietetics and medicine and modes of meditation and ritual. Offered as ARTH 308, ARTH 408, and RLGN 308. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 310. Cognitive Science of Religion. 3 Units.
This course introduces theories and methods in the cognitive science of religion. Particular emphasis is placed on applying cognitive scientific concepts and theories to such religious issues as belief in deities, religious ritual, and morality. We examine such topics as the relationship of religious studies to evolution and cognition, cognitive theories or religious ritual, anthropomorphism and religious representation, religion as an evolutionary adaptation, and cognitive semantics and religious language. Course work includes student-led discussions, a research-intensive journal-length essay on a topic chosen in consultation with the Instructor, and presentation of research findings to the class. Course readings are taken from the humanities, the social sciences, and natural sciences. Offered as COGS 310, COGS 410, RLGN 310 and RLGN 410.

RLGN 311. Representations of Black Religion in Film. 3 Units.
In this course we will explore cinematic representations of black religion in the Americas and the Caribbean. Each week we will view a film representing diverse religious traditions such as Christianity, Candomble, Santeria, Vodou, and Islam. Films will include Cabin in the Sky, The Color Purple, Black Orpheus, The Serpent and the Rainbow, Malcolm X, Eve’s Bayou, and The Princess and the Frog. Throughout the course we will analyze the ways in which notions of gender, the history of colonialism, modern notions of race, and geographical landscapes have informed representations of black religion in film. In addition, we will discuss how these representations, in turn, have influenced cultural ideas of black religion in the Americas. Offered as RLGN 311, ETHS 311, and RLGN 411. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement. Prereq: RLGN 222 or ETHS 251 or ENGL 367 or by permission of instructor.

RLGN 312. The Mythical Trickster. 3 Units.
Few literary figures have as wide a distribution, and as long a history, as the mythical Trickster. He is at once sacred and profane, creator and destroyer; an incorrigible duper who is always duped. Free of social and moral restraints he is ruled instead by passions and appetites, yet it is through his unprincipled behavior that morals and values come into being. How are we to interpret this amazing creature? Using folkloristic theories and ethnographic methods, we will come to understand the social functions and symbolic meanings of the cross-cultural Trickster, over time and across space. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 313. Topics in Biblical Literature. 3 Units.
A departmental "topics" seminar focused on advanced textual analysis and interpretation of particular biblical (including apocryphal) texts and the critical issues of method, theory, theology, and history that pertain to those texts. Reading assignments will be divided between close, exegetical analysis of small units of texts and the study of scholarly criticism of the same texts (commentaries, journal articles, critical notes). Evaluation will be based on class preparation and participation, weekly short papers, an exegetical paper focused on a particular pericope of the student’s choice, and an interpretive paper based on exegesis of several related passages. Graduate students enrolled in the course as RLGN 413 will have the following additional requirements: (a) preliminary academic reading on the biblical material; (b) leadership/teaching of one seminar session on an academic theoretical or theological approach to the biblical text, including an additional meeting with the professor in preparation for that session; and (c) a longer final paper that critically engages the approach that was the focus of the seminar session s/he leads (15-20 pages, suitable for publication at an academic conference). Offered as RLGN 313 and RLGN 413. Prereq: RLGN 209 or permission of instructor.

RLGN 314. Mythologies of the Afterlife. 3 Units.
This course provides a multidisciplinary approach to the idea of an afterlife, and its manifestation in diverse cultures. We will examine the way varying views of the afterlife influence religion, popular culture and palliative care, and how human creativity has shaped the heavens, hells, hauntings and holidays of diverse populations over time and across space. Students will come to see the afterlife as an integral part of human history and experience, not only because it helps people die with better hope, but because it helps them to live more richly. Offered as RLGN 314 and JDST 314.

RLGN 315. Heresy and Dissidence in the Middle Ages. 3 Units.
Survey of heretical individuals and groups in Western Europe from 500 - 1500 A.D., focusing on popular rather than academic heresies. The development of intolerance in medieval society and the problems of doing history from hostile sources will also be explored. Offered as HSTY 315 and RLGN 315. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 316. Christianity in China. 3 Units.
This course critically evaluates Christianity's long history in China, beginning with the "Luminous Religion" (Jingjiao) that was propagated by Assyrian Christian missionaries in Tang China (7th century CE), the missionary endeavors of Catholic and Protestant foreign missionaries and mission societies, the rise of indigenous Chinese Christians that sought independence from foreign missionaries, the impact of communist rule and the Cultural Revolution, and current developments involving both the official government-approved churches (i.e., the Three Self Patriotic Movement and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association) on the one hand, and the house church movement (jiating jiaohui) on the other hand. Students will critically discuss and analyze the historical dimensions of Christianity's presence in China and engagement with various social, cultural, political, philosophical, and religious aspects of Chinese society, past and present, and consider the implications of emergent forms of contemporary indigenous Chinese Christian movements for the future of Chinese Christianity. Offered as RLGN 316, RLGN 416, HSTY 322, CHIN 316 and ETHS 326. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.
RLGN 317. Topics in Catholic Studies. 3 Units.
A departmental topics seminar for Catholic Studies that is focused on advanced interdisciplinary study of selected thematic issues in Catholic Studies. Students will read and discuss advanced critical readings and write book reports, response papers, and an in-depth research essay. Graduate students enrolled in the course as RLGN 417 will have additional readings, a longer final paper of publishable quality or presentation at an academic conference, and leadership/teaching of at least one seminar session under the supervision of the course instructor. Offered as RLGN 317 and RLGN 417. Prereq: RLGN 205.

RLGN 318. Christian Music: Historical and Global Perspectives. 3 Units.
Music has played an outsized role in the history and development of Christianity, from plainchant to polyphony, shape note singing to gospel, congregational hymns to contemporary genres and global musical expressions at Christian worship across different continents and cultures. Offered as an upper-division seminar for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, this seminar examines the history and development of Christian music around the world within the social, cultural, regional, ritual, and spiritual contexts that inspired their emergence and growth. While the primary approach in this seminar is historiographical, ethnomusicological principles may be utilized where appropriate to examine contemporary genres of Christian music from the Two-Thirds or Majority World. Offered as RLGN 318, RLGN 418, and MUHI 309. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 319. The Crusades. 3 Units.
This course is a survey of the history of the idea of “crusade,” the expeditions of Western Europeans to the East known as crusades, the Muslim and Eastern Christian cultures against which these movements were directed, as well as the culture of the Latin East and other consequences of these crusades. Offered as HSTY 319 and RLGN 319. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 324. Landscapes and Pilgrimages: Spatial Theory in the Study of Religion. 3 Units.
This course employs spatial approaches and theories to examine the religious praxis and identities of individuals and communities. Working notions of space include physical, socio-political, cultural, imaginative, and ritual dimensions. We will examine the themes of mapping, memory and movement related to religious landscapes and geographies as well as issues related to social justice, gender, race, power, difference, and ecology. We will also investigate the spatial practices of individuals and communities. These practices may include pilgrimage to, and construction, of religious sites, ritual procession, walking, devotional practices, community activism, and artistic endeavors. Course requirements include student participation in field excursions to religious sites and spaces in the Cleveland area and the development of a photo essay or a mixed media project related to religious space. Offered as RLGN 324 and RLGN 424.

RLGN 326. The Holocaust and the Arts. 3 Units.
This course explores artistic output during the Holocaust, as well as responses to the Holocaust in various forms, including music, art, architecture, film, and literature. Offered as MUHI 326, JDST 326, HSTY 326 and RLGN 326 Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 333. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Units.
Topics include: classical and contemporary arguments for God’s existence; divine foreknowledge and human freedom; the problem of evil and theodicy; nature and significance of religious experience; mysticism; varieties of religious metaphysics; knowledge, belief and faith; nature of religious discourse. Readings from traditional and contemporary sources. Recommended preparation for PHIL 433 and RLGN 433: PHIL 101 or RLGN 102. Offered as PHIL 333, RLGN 333, PHIL 433, and RLGN 433. Prereq: PHIL 101 or RLGN 102.

RLGN 338. Black Women and Religion. 3 Units.
This course is an exploration of the multidimensional religious experiences of black women in the United States. These experiences will be examined within particular historical periods and across diverse social and cultural contexts. Course topics and themes include black women and slave religion, spirituality and folk beliefs, religion and feminist/womanist discourse, perspectives on institutional roles, religion and activism, and spirituality and the arts. Offered as ETHS 339, RLGN 338 and WGST 339. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 343. Mysticism. 3 Units.
This class is an introduction to a central issue in the philosophy of religion concerning the nature of mystical and ineffable experiences. Are all mystical experiences the same? Is it possible to have an experience outside of language? What is the ontological and epistemological status of drug induced mystical experiences? Students will learn to write and present arguments against positions using the methods of philosophers of religion(s).

RLGN 345. Religion and Horror. 3 Units.
This seminar explores relations among religion, horror, and the monstrous in ancient scripture and contemporary horror. Course readings, discussions, and research projects approach the subject from two distinct but related directions: first, a focus on elements of horror and the monstrous in biblical and related ancient mythic and ritual texts; second, an examination of religious dimensions in the modern horror, especially as found in representations of monstrosity in literature and film. Offered as RLGN 345 and RLGN 445. Prereq: RLGN 102.

RLGN 350. Jewish Ethics. 3 Units.
An exploration of Jewish moral and ethical discourse. The first half of the course will be devoted to studying the structure and content of classical Jewish ethics on issues including marriage, abortion, euthanasia, and social justice. Students will read and react to primary Jewish religious texts. The second half of the course will focus on various modern forms of Judaism and the diversity of moral rhetoric in the Jewish community today. Readings will include such modern thinkers as Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. Offered as JDST 350, RLGN 350, and RLGN 450. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar.
RLGN 352. Language, Cognition, and Religion. 3 Units.
This course utilizes theoretical approaches found in cognitive semantics—a branch of cognitive linguistics—to study the conceptual structures and meanings of religious language. Cognitive semantics, guided by the notion that conceptual structures are embodied, examines the relationship between conceptual systems and the construction of meaning. We consider such ideas as conceptual metaphor theory, conceptual blending, image schemas, cross-domain mappings, metonymy, mental spaces, and idealized cognitive models. We apply these ideas to selected Christian, Buddhist, and Chinese religious texts in order to understand ways in which religious language categorizes and conceptualizes the world. We examine both the universality of cognitive linguistic processes and the culturally specific metaphors, conceptual blends, image schemas, and other cognitive operations that particular texts and traditions utilize. Offered as RLGN 352, RLGN 452, COGS 352 and COGS 452. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 353. Hindu and Jain Bioethics. 3 Units.
This course will provide both an introduction to basic Hinduism and Jainism and an introduction to Hindu and Jain bioethics. We will ask: How would a Hindu or a Jain respond to issues concerning euthanasia, abortion, and other topics of controversy? Are these answers altered in the North American context or in the light of recent technological changes? Offered as RLGN 353, RLGN 453, BETH 353, and BETH 453. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 370. Structuralism and Anthropology of Religion. 3 Units.
The anthropological study of religion attempts to understand individual religions as social constructs. As such, it investigates the phenomenon of religion as a general pattern of human behavior. It asks, among other things, why there are religions at all and what common characteristics, if any, religions share. Among the central concepts are notions of the sacred and the way the sacred is marked through individual behaviors and communal structures. This course introduces the philosophical and cognitive background to the anthropological study of religion and traces the ways in which this method has evolved and been applied over the last century and a half. Special emphasis will be placed on more recent developments, such as Structuralism, which focuses especially on the underlying structures of religions and religious organizations. Offered as RLGN 370 and RLGN 470.

RLGN 371. Jews under Islam and Christianity. 3 Units.
This course examines the social and political status of Jews under Muslim and Christian rule since the Middle Ages. Themes include interfaith relations, Islamic and Christian beliefs regarding the Jews, Muslim and Christian regulation of Jewry, and the Jewish response. Offered as HSTY 371, JDST 371 and RLGN 371. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 372. Anthropological Approaches to Religion. 3 Units.
The development of, and current approaches to, comparative religion from an anthropological perspective. Topics include witchcraft, ritual, myth, healing, religious language and symbolism, religion and gender, religious experience, the nature of the sacred, religion and social change, altered states of consciousness, and evil. Using material from a wide range of world cultures, critical assessment is made of conventional distinctions such as those between rational/irrational, natural/supernatural, magic/religion, and primitive/civilized. Recommended preparation: ANTH 102. Offered as ANTH 372, RLGN 372 and ANTH 472.

RLGN 373. History of the Early Church: First Through Fourth Centuries. 3 Units.
Explores the development of the diverse traditions of Christianity in the Roman Empire from the first through the fourth centuries C.E. A variety of New Testament and extra-Biblical sources are examined in translation. Emphasis is placed on the place of Christianity in the larger Roman society, and the variety of early Christian ideals of salvation, the Church, and Church leadership. Offered as HSTY 303 and RLGN 373. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 374. Reformation Europe, 1500-1650. 3 Units.
Origins and development of Protestantism, the Catholic Counter-Reformation, and the interaction between secular power and religious identity in Christian Europe. Offered as HSTY 309 and RLGN 374. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 388. Topics in Religion. 3 Units.
Critical assessment of selected topics of historical or current interest. Project must be accepted by a member of the department faculty prior to registration. Offered as RLGN 388 and RLGN 488.

RLGN 392. Independent Study. 1 - 3 Units.
Up to three semester hours of independent study may be taken in a single semester. Must have prior approval of faculty member directing the project.

RLGN 394. Honors Research I. 3 Units.
Intensive study of a topic or problem leading to the writing of an honors thesis. Requires RLGN 102 plus 9 RLGN credits and department approval. Prereq: RLGN 102 plus 9 RLGN credits.

RLGN 395. Honors Research II. 3 Units.
Intensive study of a topic or problem leading to the writing of an honors thesis. By department approval only. Prereq: RLGN 394 and by departmental approval.

RLGN 399. Major/Minor Seminar. 3 Units.
Capstone course primarily for majors and minors in religious studies. Allows students to interact with peers and faculty, reflect critically, and integrate their learning experiences. Prepares students to continue their learning in the discipline and in the liberal arts. Subject matter varies according to student and faculty needs and perspectives. May be repeated once for up to six credit hours. Counts as SAGES Senior Capstone. Prereq: RLGN 201.

RLGN 400. Foundational Readings in Religious Studies. 3 Units.
Structured as an Independent Study, this course is meant to familiarize the student with the major classical works and thinkers that have shaped the modern field of Religious Studies. Students will meet on a regular basis with the Instructor to discuss the theories and methods described in the literature.
RLGN 402. The Lemonade Class: Religion, Race, Sex and Black Music. 3 Units.
Charles Long suggests that black musical forms are creative responses to the particular circumstances of black peoples’ presence in the U.S. and black notions of the sacred. In April of 2016, Beyoncé released her visual album Lemonade two days after the death of Prince. This course is organized around the album’s title cuts and links these two artists together in an examination of religion and musical performance as creative response to the racial and gendered conditions of black life. The course investigates how both artists have used music as a platform to explore issues of race, gender, commerce, sexuality, power and divinity. The course also looks at examples from the works of earlier artists who address similar themes such as Ma Rainey, Bessie Smith, Muddy Waters, Billie Holiday, Nina Simone, Little Richard, James Brown, Marvin Gaye, and Aretha Franklin. Offered as ETHS 302, MUHI 316, RLGN 302, RLGN 402, and WGST 302. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 403. Ritual in Religion. 3 Units.
Drawing from a broad range of approaches and academic fields, this seminar offers an introduction to the study of ritual. The course has three main goals: (1) to help students become familiar with important theories of and approaches to ritual studies; (2) to explore a number of ritual practices from different cultures, from ancient priestly rites in the Bible to contemporary cockfights in Bali; and (3) to study and discuss several representations of ritual in contemporary literature and film. Offered as RLGN 301 and RLGN 403.

RLGN 404. Representations of Black Women and Religion in Film. 3 Units.
In this course we will explore cinematic representations of black women and religion in film. Each week we will view a film in class. We will begin the class with the film Imitation of Life and then the course with The Help. Throughout the course we will analyze the ways in which notions of gender, sexuality, intimate violence, and modern notions of race and color, have informed representations of black women and religion in film. In addition, we will discuss how these representations, in turn, have influenced cultural ideas about black women in the Americas. Offered as RLGN 304, RLGN 404, WGST 304, and ETHS 304. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 407. Body, Health and Medicine in Chinese Religions: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives. 3 Units.
This course critically evaluates the history and development of traditional Chinese approaches to health and medicine in the context of Chinese religious, philosophical, and socio-cultural history. It examines the constructions of the body in Chinese religious and philosophical thought across different historical periods and evaluates their significance and implications for understanding Chinese approaches to health and medicine. It discusses the conceptions of “health” and “good health” in ancient China, the distinction between “healing” and “curing,” the development of the complementary yin-yang and five phases (wuxing) theories, understandings of nature (xing) and body (ti), the concept of qi as life force, and various microcosm-macrocosm analogies that emerged from Chinese religious and philosophical traditions. It explores how these religious and philosophical frameworks, beginning with the Daoist classic, Basic Questions in the Inner Classic of the Yellow Emperor (Huangdi Neijing Suwen) have evolved to undergird the development of diet, acupuncture, moxibustion, meditation, and various alchemical practices within Chinese holistic conceptions of health and practices of Traditional Chinese Medicine. Offered as RLGN 307, RLGN 407, CHIN 307, HSTY 308, and ETHS 307. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 410. Cognitive Science of Religion. 3 Units.
This course introduces theories and methods in the cognitive science of religion. Particular emphasis is placed on applying cognitive scientific concepts and theories to such religious issues as belief in deities, religious ritual, and morality. We examine such topics as the relationship of religious studies to evolution and cognition, cognitive theories or religious ritual, anthropomorphism and religious representation, religion as an evolutionary adaptation, and cognitive semantics and religious language. Course work includes student-led discussions, a research-intensive journal-length essay on a topic chosen in consultation with the Instructor, and presentation of research findings to the class. Course readings are taken from the humanities, the social sciences, and natural sciences. Offered as COGS 310, COGS 410, RLGN 310 and RLGN 410.

RLGN 411. Representations of Black Religion in Film. 3 Units.
In this course we will explore cinematic representations of black religion in the Americas and the Caribbean. Each week we will view a film representing diverse religious traditions such as Christianity, Candomble, Santeria, Vodou, and Islam. Films will include Cabin in the Sky, The Color Purple, Black Orpheus, The Serpent and the Rainbow, Malcolm X, Eve’s Bayou, and The Princess and the Frog. Throughout the course we will analyze the ways in which notions of gender, the history of colonialism, modern notions of race, and geographical landscapes have informed representaties of black religion in film. In addition, we will discuss how these representations, in turn, have influenced cultural ideas of black religion in the Americas. Offered as RLGN 311, ETHS 311, and RLGN 411. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 413. Topics in Biblical Literature. 3 Units.
A departmental “topics” seminar focused on advanced textual analysis and interpretation of particular biblical (including apocryphal) texts and the critical issues of method, theory, theology, and history that pertain to those texts. Reading assignments will be divided between close, exegetical analysis of small units of texts and the study of scholarly criticism of the same texts (commentaries, journal articles, critical notes). Evaluation will be based on class preparation and participation, weekly short papers, an exegetical paper focused on a particular pericope of the student’s choice, and an interpretive paper based on exegesis of several related passages. Graduate students enrolled in the course as RLGN 413 will have the following additional requirements: (a) preliminary academic reading on the biblical material; (b) leadership/teaching of one seminar session on an academic theoretical or theological approach to the biblical text, including an additional meeting with the professor in preparation for that session; and (c) a longer final paper that critical engages the approach that was the focus of the seminar session s/he leads (15-20 pages, suitable for publication at an academic conference). Offered as RLGN 313 and RLGN 413.
RLGN 416. Christianity in China. 3 Units.
This course critically evaluates Christianity’s long history in China, beginning with the “Luminous Religion” (Jingjiao) that was propagated by Assyrian Christian missionaries in Tang China (7th century CE), the missionary endeavors of Catholic and Protestant foreign missionaries and mission societies, the rise of indigenous Chinese Christianities that sought independence from foreign missionaries, the impact of communist rule and the Cultural Revolution, and current developments involving both the official government-approved churches (i.e., the Three Self Patriotic Movement and the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association) on the one hand, and the house church movement (jiating jiaohui) on the other hand. Students will critically discuss and analyze the historical dimensions of Christianity’s presence in China and engagement with various social, cultural, political, philosophical, and religious aspects of Chinese society, past and present, and consider the implications of emergent forms of contemporary indigenous Chinese Christian movements for the future of Chinese Christianity. Offered as RLGN 316, RLGN 416, HSTY 322, CHIN 316 and ETHS 326. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 417. Topics in Catholic Studies. 3 Units.
A departmental topics seminar for Catholic Studies that is focused on advanced interdisciplinary study of selected thematic issues in Catholic Studies. Students will read and discuss advanced critical readings and write book reports, response papers, and an in-depth research essay. Graduate students enrolled in the course as RLGN 417 will have additional readings, a longer final paper of publishable quality or presentation at an academic conference, and leadership/teaching of at least one seminar session under the supervision of the course instructor. Offered as RLGN 317 and RLGN 417.

RLGN 418. Christian Music: Historical and Global Perspectives. 3 Units.
Music has played an outsized role in the history and development of Christianity, from plainchant to polyphony, shape note singing to gospel, congregational hymns to contemporary genres and global musical expressions at Christian worship across different continents and cultures. Offered as an upper-division seminar for advanced undergraduate and graduate students, this seminar examines the history and development of Christian music around the world within the social, cultural, regional, ritual, and spiritual contexts that inspired their emergence and growth. While the primary approach in this seminar is historiographical, ethnomusicalological principles may be utilized where appropriate to examine contemporary genres of Christian music from the Two-Thirds or Majority World. Offered as RLGN 318, RLGN 418, and MUHI 309. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 424. Landscapes and Pilgrimages: Spatial Theory in the Study of Religion. 3 Units.
This course employs spatial approaches and theories to examine the religious praxis and identities of individuals and communities. Working notions of space include physical, socio-political, cultural, imaginative, and ritual dimensions. We will examine the themes of mapping, memory and movement related to religious landscapes and geographies as well as issues related to social justice, gender, race, power, difference, and ecology. We will also investigate the spatial practices of individuals and communities. These practices may include pilgrimage to, and construction, of religious sites, ritual procession, walking, devotional practices, community activism, and artistic endeavors. Course requirements include student participation in field excursions to religious sites and spaces in the Cleveland area and the development of a photo essay or a mixed media project related to religious space. Offered as RLGN 324 and RLGN 424.

RLGN 430. Genealogies of Religious Otherness. 3 Units.
Concepts of otherness pervade recent theories of religion. More or less related to one another, many of these concepts are borrowed from fields other than academic religious studies. This seminar explores the genealogies of otherness in theoretical discourse as they relate to religion. In the course of this seminar, our researches and discussions will address several key issues in academic religious studies, including: psychological and sociological processes of projection and their roles in the construction and deconstruction of religious identity; the significance of gender, sexuality, and ethnicity to these projections; concepts of otherness in mystical religious thought and experience; and the interrelations of order and chaos, figuring and disfiguring within religious ideas, institutions, and practices, interrelations that challenge common theoretical perspectives that treat religion primarily if not exclusively as a means of establishing order against chaos and as a force of social and ideological structure legitimation.

RLGN 433. Philosophy of Religion. 3 Units.
Topics include: classical and contemporary arguments for God’s existence; divine foreknowledge and human freedom; the problem of evil and theodicy; nature and significance of religious experience; mysticism; varieties of religious metaphysics; knowledge, belief and faith; nature of religious discourse. Readings from traditional and contemporary sources. Recommended preparation for PHIL 333 and RLGN 433: PHIL 101 or RLGN 102. Offered as PHIL 333, RLGN 333, PHIL 433, and RLGN 433.

RLGN 440. Insiders and Outsiders in the Study of Religion. 3 Units.
This course will provide an introduction to one of the most important theoretical and methodological issues in the social sciences and in religious studies, namely, the epistemic authority of the insider and of the outsider. We will read books and articles, both classical and contemporary, on the topic. My goal is to place students at the center of a contemporary debate in the study of religion. We will also examine both hypothetical and actual communities that uphold insider epistemologies.

RLGN 445. Religion and Horror. 3 Units.
This seminar explores relations among religion, horror, and the monstrous in ancient scripture and contemporary horror. Course readings, discussions, and research projects approach the subject from two distinct but related directions: first, a focus on elements of horror and the monstrous in biblical and related ancient mythic and ritual texts; second, an examination of religious dimensions in the modern horror, especially as found in representations of monstrosity in literature and film. Offered as RLGN 345 and RLGN 445.

RLGN 450. Jewish Ethics. 3 Units.
An exploration of Jewish moral and ethical discourse. The first half of the course will be devoted to studying the structure and content of classical Jewish ethics on issues including marriage, abortion, euthanasia, and social justice. Students will read and react to primary Jewish religious texts. The second half of the course will focus on various modern forms of Judaism and the diversity of moral rhetoric in the Jewish community today. Readings will include such modern thinkers as Martin Buber and Abraham Joshua Heschel. Offered as JDST 350, RLGN 350, and RLGN 450. Counts as SAGES Departmental Seminar.
RLGN 452. Language, Cognition, and Religion. 3 Units.
This course utilizes theoretical approaches found in cognitive semantics--a branch of cognitive linguistics--to study the conceptual structures and meanings of religious language. Cognitive semantics, guided by the notion that conceptual structures are embodied, examines the relationship between conceptual systems and the construction of meaning. We consider such ideas as conceptual metaphor theory, conceptual blending, Image schemas, cross-domain mappings, metonymy, mental spaces, and idealized cognitive models. We apply these ideas to selected Christian, Buddhist, and Chinese religious texts in order to understand ways in which religious language categorizes and conceptualizes the world. We examine both the universality of cognitive linguistic processes and the culturally specific metaphors, conceptual blends, image schemas, and other cognitive operations that particular texts and traditions utilize. Offered as RLGN 352, RLGN 452, COGS 352 and COGS 452. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 453. Hindu and Jain Bioethics. 3 Units.
This course will provide both an introduction to basic Hinduism and Jainism and an introduction to Hindu and Jain bioethics. We will ask: How would a Hindu or a Jain respond to issues concerning euthanasia, abortion, and other topics of controversy. Are these answers altered in the North American context or in the light of recent technological changes? Offered as RLGN 353, RLGN 453, BETH 353, and BETH 453. Counts for CAS Global & Cultural Diversity Requirement.

RLGN 460. Approaches to the Study of Urban Religion. 3 Units.
This course will introduce students to basic concepts and tools used in sociology of religion drawing upon works from various theorists and sociologists of religion such as Nancy Ammerman, Peter Berger, and Robert Wuthnow. The course will analyze the relationship between the role and structure of religion in North America and the larger historical, cultural and social landscape. Utilizing the city of Cleveland as a resource, students will apply the tools and concepts learned to explicate how religious organizations impact, and are impacted by, urban environments.

RLGN 470. Structuralism and Anthropology of Religion. 3 Units.
The anthropological study of religion attempts to understand individual religions as social constructs. As such, it investigates the phenomenon of religion as a general pattern of human behavior. It asks, among other things, why there are religions at all and what common characteristics, if any, religions share. Among the central concepts are notions of the sacred and the way the sacred is marked through individual behaviors and communal structures. This course introduces the philosophical and cognitive background to the anthropological study of religion and traces the ways in which this method has evolved and been applied over the last century and a half. Special emphasis will be placed on more recent developments, such as Structuralism, which focuses especially on the underlying structures of religions and religious organizations. Offered as RLGN 370 and RLGN 470.

RLGN 488. Topics in Religion. 3 Units.
Critical assessment of selected topics of historical or current interest. Project must be accepted by a member of the department faculty prior to registration. Offered as RLGN 388 and RLGN 488.

RLGN 601. Special Research. 1 - 6 Units.
Project must be accepted by a member of the department faculty prior to registration. Prereq: Graduate standing.

RLGN 651. Thesis M.A.. 1 - 9 Units.
Project must be accepted by a member of the department faculty prior to registration.