

AVAILABLE
RLG COURSES
2023-2024



*Courses with availability as of September 21, 2023. If you have any questions, please contact the Undergraduate Assistant, Phoebe, at religion.undergrad@utoronto.ca.

Courses by Content:

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Judaism

RLG327H1S: Hospitality and Ethics in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam

Professor Harry Fox | Winter – Thursdays 11am-1pm

Jacques Derrida claims that hospitality is the cornerstone of ethics. This intersection of hospitality with ethics is worth testing.

Christianity

RLG241H1S: The Earliest Christians

Professor John Kloppenborg | Winter – Wednesdays 5pm-7pm, with tutorials

Christianity began as a tiny movement in rural Palestine, becoming a significant religion for many inhabitants in the cities of Greece and Rome, eventually becoming the official religion of the Empire. How did this happen? This course examines the interactions between the earliest followers of Jesus and the dominant cultures of Greece and Rome. No prior knowledge of Christianity or the Bible is required.

RLG242H1S: Bible in America

Professor Nyasha Junior | Winter – Mondays 1pm-3pm

This course will focus on the use, influence, and impact of biblical interpretation in the United States of America. We will uncover how texts are repurposed, corralled, and coerced into addressing various issues, including enslavement, childbearing, and immigration. No prior knowledge of biblical texts is required.

RLG324H1S: The Apostle Paul and His Enemies

Professor Ronald Charles | Winter – Thursdays 5pm-7pm

This course introduces a very important figure in the history of Christianity. Many consider Paul as the inventor of Christianity; many others view him as a misogynist and the source of all the problems with this religious tradition. Come to this exciting class to form a clear understanding of who Paul was.

RLG451H1S: The Parables of Jesus

Professor John Kloppenborg | Winter – Thursdays 9am-11am

What are parables? Homely example stories? Riddles? Allegories? Mysterious stories that don't mean what they appear to say? This course looks at the ways that the reading of parables has been distorted by the social and political interests of later readers, and introduces new methods of reading the parables that draw on new insights for understanding life in the ancient Mediterranean drawn from recent discoveries of papyri.

Hinduism

RLG366H1S: Hindu Philosophy

Professor Alessandro Graheli | Winter – Mondays 11am-1pm

Two centuries back, Hegel famously claimed that philosophy was born and flourished in ancient Greece and Europe, while in India it existed only in an immature, pre-historical form. A reason behind his uncharitable assessment of Hindu philosophy was his ignorance of the sources. In this course we will explore this neglected rational soul of Hindu thought. Unbeknownst to Hegel and later Orientalists, in fact, Hindu philosophy is the dialectic product of a dialogue among the traditional Sanskrit sciences of

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(1) Linguistics, (2) Hermeneutics, (3) Epistemology, and (4) Poetics. During the course we will evaluate the evidence in favour and against four central claims made by these four disciplines in defense of the Vega, the sacred scripture of the Hindus: (1a) 'The relation between words and meanings is eternal', (2a) 'Words denote universals', (3a) 'The meaning of a sentence is its truth value, (4a) 'All sentence-meanings are figurative meanings'. We will also evaluate some crucial Buddhist tenets that challenged these claims, thus forcing their proponents to gradually refine the traditional views.

Buddhism

RLG371H1S: Interdependence

Dr. Eleanor Pontoriero | Winter – Mondays 11am-1pm

This year, we will explore socially engaged Buddhist ethics and practice from Theravada and Mahayana perspectives. Our theme is interdependence – how this ethic informs, and manifests in socially engaged Buddhist approaches to human rights, peacebuilding, racial, gender, and environmental justice and inter- and intra- faith dialogue. Our focus will be contemporary, intersectional, and diverse.

JNR301H1S: The History of Buddhist Meditation

Barbara Hazelton | Winter – Mondays 1pm-3pm

This course will survey historical, cultural, and textual contexts for Buddhist meditative and contemplative practices and techniques.

RLG468H1S: Special Topics in Buddhism – Reading Buddhist Texts I

Professor Amanda Goodman | Winter – Wednesdays 10am-12pm

This course explores facets of Chan Buddhist thought, with a focus on the relationship between Classical Chinese thought and the early Chan tradition. Western philosophical theories such as philosophy of mind and phenomenology, where relevant to Chan studies, will also be considered. Weekly topics will include: Chan and the Zhuangzi; the making of Chinese Buddhas and Chinese Buddhist sūtras; the sudden-gradual debate; non-duality; the Chan-Tantra connection; mind-to-mind transmission; *gong'an* literature and paradox; uses of apophatic language; Chan and the environment. Course readings will be provided in English translation. A reading group for students with proficiency in Literary Chinese will be held separately.

Capstone Courses

RLG404H1S: Departmental Capstone – Research

Dr. Ynon Wygoda | Winter – Tuesdays 1pm-3pm

This seminar gives you the chance to explore the role of research in undergraduate education, and to construct a retrospective view of your and others' experiences of studying religion in the university. Each student will also develop a research project and will examine a range of audiences for their research, from specialists in their field, to wider academic scholars, to an audience beyond the university. Interaction between students will be a central feature of the work of the seminar.

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Exploring Varieties of Religious Expression

RLG211H1S: Psychology of Religion

Professor Marsha Hewitt | Winter – Thursdays 11am-1pm, with tutorials

The psychoanalytic study of religion examines the nature of religious beliefs, experiences and practices as creations of mind and culture. What is the nature of and relationship between belief and knowledge, subjective and objective experience/reality, phantasy, dreams and reality? How do the individual and social unconscious create and shape religious beliefs, experiences and practices? These and other questions are explored in order to understand the ways in which psychoanalysis, as a critical theory of religion, contributes to theorizing the ways in which individual psychology is also social psychology. Included in our focus is a consideration of mystical, visionary, esoteric and paranormal experiences in the psychoanalytic study of religion. Insights from evolutionary and cognitive psychology and neuroscience will be considered as well in our discussions of psychology and religion.

RLG234H1S: Language and Religion

Professor Libbie Mills | Winter – Tuesdays 3pm-5pm

Can religion be construed outside of the realm of human language?

Can artificial agents engage in it?

What do our reactions to these questions tell us?

Join Libbie in thinking through the interoperation of language and religion in this exploratory course.

RLG317H1S: Religion, Violence, and Non-Violence

Professor Srilata Raman and Jesse Pruitt | Winter – Wednesdays 11am-1pm

People acting in the name of religion(s) have incited violence and worked for peace. How can we understand this tension both today and in the past? Through examination of the power of authoritative tradition, collective solidarity, charisma, and acts of resistance, this course addresses religious justifications of violence and non-violence across varied historical and geographical contexts.

RLG393H1S: Graphic Religion: Myth and the Spiritual in Graphic Novels

Dr. David Perley | Winter – Wednesdays 1pm-3pm

This course explores the various ways religion and religious themes connect with graphic novels, comic books, and sequential art. We look at not only religion in comics, but also explore: the use of comic books as a form of religious pedagogy within particular traditions (e.g., Jack Chick tracts); comparisons between religious imaginaries and comic book myths and cosmologies (e.g., superhumans, multiverses, and alternate realities); alternative-independent graphic novels as a means to express marginalized experiences; and finally, an analysis of the power and effectiveness of a medium that is a complicated combination of word and image.

RLG387H1S: Religion and Science

Professor Simon Coleman | Winter – Tuesdays 11am-1pm

Science and Religion is one of the most eclectic and boundary-crossing courses that I teach. We bring majors from the arts, natural sciences, and social sciences together and find different ways to ask: What is knowledge? The results are usually challenging and surprising.

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