AVAILABLE
RLG COURSES
2023-2024

*Courses with availability as of September 15, 2023. If you have any questions, please contact the Undergraduate Assistant, Phoebe, at religion.undergrad@utoronto.ca.
Courses by Content:

- Judaism
- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Buddhism

100-Level Courses
- Philosophy of Religion
- Languages
- Capstone Courses
- Exploring Varieties of Religious Expression

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Judaism

RLG341H1F: Dreaming of Zion: Exile and Return in Jewish Thought
Professor Kenneth Green | Fall – Wednesdays 10am-12pm
People have been fascinated by how Judaism has managed to survive for 4000 years, despite enduring a long history of hatred and oppression. We will view the survival of the Jews as shaped by two transformative ideas – exile and return – and discuss how these ideas changed through the unusual history of the Jewish people.

RLG346H1F: Time and Place in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam
Professor Harry Fox | Fall – Thursdays 11am-1pm
Perspectives of time and place are pervasive. To formally address these parameters of religions with their individual sense of time and place is a formidable research tool to the study of religion.

RLG347H1F: Judaism in the Late Modern Era
Professor Kenneth Green | Fall – Wednesdays 2pm-4pm
How did an ancient tradition persist through the powerful challenges of modernity? Judaism was only able to do so because it creatively remade itself in the modern era. We will learn about those critical thinkers and original ideas which helped move Jews in new and unprecedented directions, while teaching them how to live as specifically modern Jews.

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.

RLG242H1F or S: Bible in America
Professor Nyasha Junior | Fall – Tuesdays 1pm-3pm OR 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.

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RLG321H1F: Women and the Hebrew Bible  
Professor Nyasha Junior | Fall – Tuesdays 9am-11am  
Is a Proverbs 31 woman an ideal woman? How does Sarai become Sarah? Who had a child named Immanuel? This course will provide an overview of the Hebrew Bible (also called the Old Testament) with a focus on women characters. No prior knowledge of biblical texts or biblical languages is required.

RLG322H1F: Early Gospels  
Professor John Kloppenborg | Fall – Wednesdays 1pm-3pm  
Early Christians produced multiple biographies of Jesus that we call “gospels”. In addition to those found in the Christian Bible, there are gospels attributed to Thomas, Mary, Philip, Peter, “the Egyptians” and others. These display a remarkable diversity in the portraits of Jesus, some focusing on Jesus’ strange wisdom, others on the young Jesus’ prodigious miracle working, others on Jesus as a sage like Socrates. The study of gospels lets us see the characteristics of ancient biographies, which differed remarkably from how modern biographies are constructed.

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 (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.

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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.

100-Level Courses

JRC199H1F: Truths & Reconciliations in Canada
Professor Krista Barclay | Fall – Thursdays 5pm-7pm
In this course, we examine the idea of reconciliation among Indigenous and Canadian nations by considering the complicated role of religion and spirituality in “truth and reconciliation”. Specifically, residential schools for Indigenous children were a collaboration of church and state that violently broke the spirit and intent of the treaties – or sacred promises – made between the Crown and Indigenous nations. The course will set the 2015 Truth & Reconciliation Commission of Canada in a longer history of twentieth-century commissions, reports, and petitions in which both Indigenous and Canadian people (and some churches) named the cultural and spiritual genocide of residential schools and called for action. Restricted to first-year students. Not eligible for CR/NCR option.

RLG195H1F: Alt-Bible: What Could Have Been | Article
Professor John Marshall | Fall – Thursdays 11am-1pm
Why does our contemporary Bible not include any daughters for Adam and Eve or any stories of Jesus as a young boy? What if Enoch was more prominent than Moses or Thomas more prominent than Paul? “The Bible” that we have is not a single book or a simple collection, but something that has grown over time, been the object of contention and argument, and has sometimes been a common ground across traditions. We examine side-by-side writings that have become canonical and writings that once held

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authority but have not found widespread canonical status, and strive to understand the processes by which we ended up with "the Bible" we have today. Restricted to first-year students. Not eligible for CR/NCR option.

**Philosophy of Religion**

*RLG392H1F: The European Enlightenment and Religion*
*Professor James DiCenso | Fall – Wednesdays 1pm-3pm*
This course explores some of the major thinkers of the European Enlightenment and their philosophical inquiries into the meaning and significance of religion as a set of cultural institutions. Special attention is paid to the analysis of religious concepts and institutions along epistemological, ethical, and political lines.

**Languages**

*RLG264H1F & RLG265H1S: Introductory Pali I & II*
*Professor Libbie Mills | Fall/Winter - Mondays 4pm-5pm & Wednesdays 3pm-5pm*
The DSR Pali classes are a peaceful home in which to learn about Buddhism through the direct and lively texts of Pali, one of Buddhism’s earliest languages.

**Capstone Courses**

*RLG405H1F: Departmental Capstone – Practical*
*Dr. David Perley | Fall – Wednesdays 1pm-3pm*
The Practical Capstone is a perfect opportunity for Religion Majors and Specialists to meet each other and work together during their culminating years. In past years students enrolled come from diverse research backgrounds which leads to opportunities for students to inform each other about alternative approaches to the study of religion. Students will have the opportunity to collaborate on presenting themes related to the intersection of religion and various public spheres. Students will also share insights from their individual research projects with the rest of the group. In our current global, political climate it is more apparent than ever that the convenient, abstract separation of ‘religious’ from ‘secular’ elements of life is completely inadequate to understand the world around us. A core question we work on is: how can academics inform public spheres about the complexities of religious worldviews and ideologies, especially as these worldviews impact policies, laws, and cultural practices that go far beyond the abstract idea of a separate ‘religious sphere’?

*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

RLG217H1F: Black Diaspora Religions
Professor Ronald Charles | Fall – Mondays 5pm-7pm
This course critically examines the intersection of religion and cultural expressions in the African Diaspora, with a particular emphasis on the Canadian landscape. The importance of religion in the Black Diaspora’s experience of both oppression and liberation will be a key component of our analytic framework in explaining and understanding the Black/African experience and culture in the diaspora.

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.

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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.

RLG411H1F: Advanced Topics in Religion – Mysticism and Poetics
Professor Alexander Hampton / Fall – Wednesdays 11am-1pm
This course will consider some of the consummate poet-mystics in Western Christianity, including Iacopone, Dante, Mechthild, Hadewijch, Silesius, Traherne, and Blake. It will examine how the recording of mystical experience in poetic form allows the mystical writer to achieve a result not otherwise possible in regular forms of communication. Readings will explore how, through the practice of mystical poetry, language becomes approximate and playful, capable of giving presence to absence, materiality to the immaterial, and lexicon to the non-lexical.

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