World Religions
REL 1300 CRN #13464
TR 11 – 12:20 p.m.
CENT 215

Instructor: Binita Metha, Ph.D.
Description: This course offers an introduction to the major religions of the world. On the basis of primary foundational texts and secondary scholarly literature, the course will provide an overview of the historical development of these religious traditions and will examine the core ideas and concepts, myths, symbols and practices within a tradition. The lectures will also include a discussion of religious expression in arts, music and culture. Images and video clips on various aspects of religion will be shown as an integral part of the course material.
Required Texts: All required readings will be posted on TRACS.

World Religions
REL 1300 CRN # 16830
MW 11 – 12:20
CMAL 114

Instructor: Joe Laycock, Ph.D.
Description: This course is an introduction to the beliefs and practices of the world’s most influential religions. Students in this class will also learn to think about problems from the perspective of religious studies. What can be learned by comparing religions to each other? Are religions actually “all the same” or do differences matter? The Constitution guarantees the free exercise of religion but never states what “religion” is. What counts as a religion and who gets to decide?
Required Texts: Stephen Prothero, God is Not One (HarperCollins, 2010)

REL 1300 CRN # 17808
World Religions
TTH 9:30 – 10:50 a.m.
CMAL 114

Instructor: Binita Metha, Ph.D.
Description: This course offers an introduction to the major religions of the world. On the basis of primary foundational texts and secondary scholarly literature, the course will provide an overview of the historical development of these religious traditions and will examine the core ideas and concepts, myths, symbols and practices within a tradition. The lectures will also include a discussion of religious expression in arts, music and culture. Images and video clips on various aspects of religion will be shown as an integral part of the course material.
Required Texts: All required readings will be posted on TRACS.
Asian Religions
REL 2360 CRN# 19480
MW 3:30 – 4:50
Comal 114

Instructor: Binita Metha, Ph.D.
Description: This course offers an introduction to the diverse religious traditions of South East and East Asia. We will focus on Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism and Confucianism. On the basis of primary foundational texts and secondary scholarly literature, we will study the core ideas and concepts, myths, symbols and practices of these traditions. Students will also get acquainted with the manner in which religious perspectives have influenced social practices and arts in the South East and East Asian cultures. Images and video clips on various aspects of religion will be shown as an integral part of the course material.
Required Texts: All required readings will be posted on TRACS.

Cults and New Religions
REL 3335 CRN# 17420
TTH 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.
CMAL 114

Instructor: Joe Laycock, Ph.D.
Description: This course is a survey of controversial, marginalized, and misunderstood religious traditions and communities. What does it mean to call a group a “cult”? Where is the line between religious belief and mental illness? Is brainwashing real? Does religious freedom give you the right to use illegal drugs or have multiple wives? What causes religious groups to become violent? We will explore these questions using a variety of approaches.

Religion & Film
REL 3361A CRN # 17421
TR 2 – 3:20
CMAL 114

Instructor: Joe Laycock, Ph.D.
Description: Religious traditions and films are both in the business of “world creating.” Religious traditions shape the way believers understand their place in the world. Films create temporary worlds and invite us to enter. This course will examine how religious ideas are reflected in film and how films have taken on some of the functions traditionally served by religion. As our culture passes from literacy to visuality, discerning how the various dimensions of religious belief and practice are reflected and refracted through film is an important element in understanding the nature of religion in late modern society. In particular, this course will focus on the themes of rituals, myths, and values as they relate to both religion and film.
Required Texts: None. Students may need to purchase online access to films.
Philosophy of Judaism, Christianity and Islam
REL 3361C CRN #19975
TR 9:30 – 10:50
DERR 111

Instructor:  Rebecca Raphael, Ph.D.
Description: This course explores key philosophical issues common to Judaism, Christianity, Islam. These include concepts of deity, concepts of human nature, the problem of evil, the concept and status of scripture, philosophies of history, mysticism, aesthetics, and ethics. We will also investigate why ideas common to these traditions tend to produce certain philosophical problems. The readings will include material from ancient, medieval, and modern periods, and will encompass both classics and contemporary critiques of classical authors. The course is reading- and writing-intensive. Meets with REL 5365.

Mythology & Cosmology
REL 3370 CRN #19975
TR 9:30 – 10:50
DERR 111

Instructor:  Rebecca Raphael, Ph.D.
Description: How did the world come to be? How can we know it? This course examines major ways of imagining the origin(s), structure, and purpose of the cosmos. In traditional societies, people used story-telling -- cosmogonic (creation) myths -- to address these matters and to place human beings and society within the represented cosmic structure. The modern science of cosmology approaches some of the same questions by the distinct process of scientific method. The course is doubly comparative: it compares creation myths from different cultures and also compares mythopoetic narrative with scientific method. Throughout, we shall reflect on the connection between cosmological models, the epistemology of world-construction, and the human need for meaning.
Instructor: Rebecca Raphael, Ph.D.
Description: This course explores key philosophical issues common to Judaism, Christianity, Islam. These include concepts of deity, concepts of human nature, the problem of evil, the concept and status of scripture, philosophies of history, aesthetics, and ethics. We will also investigate why ideas common to these traditions tend to produce certain philosophical problems. The readings will include material from ancient, medieval, and modern periods, and will encompass both classics and contemporary critiques of classical authors. The course is reading- and writing-intensive. Graduate students will be expected to prepare and lead one class discussion, and also to produce a substantial term paper. Meets with REL 3361C.