

## Religion

**Program Office** 1241 West Building; 772-4989

**Director** Barbara Sproul

**Associate Professor** Sproul

**Assistant Professors** Long, Schwebel

**Coordinating Committee** Green (Classical and Oriental Studies), Long (Religion), Schwebel (Religion), Sproul (Religion), Welter (History).

In the Program in Religion, students examine the nature of religion and the forms its various expressions have taken. Religion is studied as an academic discipline and the program's approach reflects no doctrinal bias. The purposes of the program are to introduce the field of religion in general; to present the thoughts, documents, and history of major religious traditions (both Eastern and Western, ancient and modern, missionary and tribal); and to give students insight into specific religious issues and thinkers.

The Program in Religion consists of a series of core courses taught by specialists in the field, augmented by other religion courses offered by staff in 10 participating departments or divisions: anthropology, Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies, Chinese, classics, English, geography, Hebrew, history, philosophy, and sociology. The program is divided into five categories of courses:

- I. Introduction to the field of religion (basic introductory courses);
- II. Theoretical studies in religion (courses focusing on different methodological approaches to the study of religion);
- III. Issues in religion (courses dealing with religious experience, faith, ethics, religion and the arts);
- IV. Religious traditions (courses in major religious traditions);
- V. Related courses.

**General Education Requirement** REL 208(W) may be used to fulfill Broad Exposure/Stage 2, Group B. REL 110(W), 111(W), 204(W), 205(W), 206(W), 207(W), 251(W), 252(W), 253(W), 254(W), 255(W), 256(W), or 270(W) may be used to fulfill Broad Exposure/Stage 2, Group C. REL 307(W), 308(W), 309(W), 310(W), 311(W), 312(W), 313(W), 315(W), 320(W), 321(W), 322(W), 323(W), 324(W), 330(W), 333(W), 334(W), 335(W), 336(W), 337(W), 340(W) and 390(W) may be used to fulfill Focused Exposure/Stage 3, Group A.

**Distribution Requirement** See Appendix A for the Distribution Requirement, which was replaced by the General Education Requirement in fall 2001 and which may be binding on students who matriculated prior to fall 2001.

**Major** (24 cr) At least 18 credits are to be taken from the following four categories: I. Introduction to the field of religion; II. Theoretical studies in religion; III. Issues in religion; and IV. Religious traditions. Normally, both introductory courses (REL 110, 111) must be taken and followed by at least one course in theoretical studies, one in religious issues, and one in religious traditions. No more than two courses from Category V (related courses) may be applied toward the major.

Upon becoming a major, the student, in consultation with the director, will select one member of the Program in Religion staff as his or her major advisor. Each religion major is required to consult with this advisor at least twice a year.

**Minor** Religion majors may minor in any discipline at Hunter which has a major or in education.

**Departmental Honors** Two related requirements must be met by a student in order to qualify for departmental honors: participation in either REL 450 or 490 as well as completion of the honors essay, which will be written in relation to REL 450 or 490 and under the supervision of the Religion Honors Committee. A student who completes either of these courses with a grade of B or above and achieves a final GPA in religion major courses of at least 3.5 and a final cumulative GPA of at least 3.0 will be awarded Honors in Religion.

### COURSE LISTINGS

#### I. Introduction to the Field of Religion

**REL 110(W) Nature of Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr, GER/2/C. Prereq: ENGL 120. Study of basic facets of religion: God, ethics, worship, faith, myth, ritual, symbolism, etc.

**REL 111(W) Approaches to Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C. Prereq: ENGL 120. Different understandings of religion: sociological, anthropological, psychological, philosophical, theological.

#### II. Theoretical Studies in Religion

**ANTHC 307 Anthropology of Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Emphasis on non-Western societies, theories of religion and ritual, functions and symbolic meanings.

**GEOG 348 Geography of Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: GEOG 101 or REL 110 or 111 or perm instr. Offered on demand. Geographic views of religion and religious phenomena. Origin, diffusion, distribution, pilgrimages, environmental impact.

**PHILO 262(W) Philosophy of Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/3/A. Prereq: ENGL 120, 1 course in philosophy or religion. Philosophical examinations of religious questions and beliefs.

**REL 270(W) Religion and Psychology** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120. GER/2/C; PD/D. An examination of ways in which psychology understands, describes, values (or devalues) religion using the media of text, story and film.

**SOC 205 Sociology of Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: SOC 121 or perm instr. Comparative functional study of religion in human societies. Analysis of beliefs, myths and sacred attitudes.

**REL 390(W) Modern Theories in Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120, REL 111 or equiv, and at least one other course in religion or one of the theoretical courses offered in one of the participating departments such as ANTHRO 307, PHILO 262 or SOC 205, and perm instr. GER/3/A; PD/D. An advanced methodology course surveying key issues and main approaches under discussion in the current study of religion when standard methods of interpretation are being subjected to exhaustive critique and revision and new theories are being proposed.

**REL 260 Special Topics: Theoretical Studies in Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Specialized study of a methodological approach to the study of religion. Different topic each time offered.

**REL 360 Special Topics: Theoretical Studies in Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Specialized study of a methodological approach to study of religion. Different topic each time offered.

#### III. Issues in Religion

**REL 204(W) Religious Experience** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C. Cross-cultural analysis of religious experiences: Biblical, ancient Greek, Asian, modern Western.

**REL 205(W) Faith and Disbelief** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C; PD/D. Examination of questions of faith and disbelief in modern Western thought.

**REL 206(W) Ideas of God in Contemporary Western Thought** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C; PD/D. Survey of representative schools of current Western religious thought: Christian theism, "metaphysical protest," process theology, feminist theology, liberation theology, "beyond theism" thought.

**REL 207(W) Religious Sources for Morality** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C. Religious reasons for determining good and evil; religious sources for ethical decisions.

**REL 208(W) Religion and Social Justice** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/B; PD/D. An exploration into religious perspectives on such social issues as war, race, the economy, and gender relations.

**REL 307(W) Religious Ideas in Modern Literature** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Exploration of religious themes in modern literature.

**REL 308(W) Religion and the Arts** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Examination of religious themes in art, music, theatre, cinema, or literature. Different topics each time offered.

**REL 309(W) The Religious Meaning of Love and Sex** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Interdisciplinary investigation of the major ways human-kind has understood the relation between the sexually erotic and religious realities.

**REL 310(W) The Religious Meaning of Death** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Consideration of the meaning of death in major world religions.

**REL 311(W) Women and Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/C. An examination of the role of women and the concept of the feminine in world religions.

**REL 312(W) Religion and Politics** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. The role of political ideology in the shaping of religious belief and theology's influence on politics in Western and non-Western traditions, both conservative and radical.

**REL 313(W) Spirit and Nature** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120. GER/3/A. An exploration of the ideas of "nature" and "animal life" in a representative sampling of the religious traditions of the world, inquiring into the implications for environmental policy and the treatment of animals.

**REL 315(W) The Problem of Evil** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Exploration of the religious meaning of "evil" in different cultures.

**REL 334(W) Mysticism** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Cross-cultural exploration of mystical experience and mystical doctrines, as well as an exploration of the various methods of studying them.

**REL 335(W) Myth and Ritual** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Cross-cultural exploration of myth and ritual and their place in various cultures; methodologies for analysis.

**REL 340(W) Homosexuality in World Religions** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120. GER/3/A; PD/C. A survey and analysis of typical ways in which homosexuality has been understood, evaluated, and in some cases institutionalized in a variety of religious traditions, attending especially to implicit constructions of gender.

**REL 261 Special Topics: Issues in Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Study of particular religious topics or thinkers. Different subject each time offered.

**REL 361 Special Topics: Issues in Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Study of particular religious topics or thinkers. Different subject each time offered.

#### IV. Religious Traditions

**REL 251(W) Eastern Religions** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C; PD/A. Study of Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

**REL 320(W) Hinduism** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/A. Study of Hinduism, its development, history, literature, philosophy, and religious practices.

**REL 321(W) Buddhism** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/A. Study of Buddhism, its development, history, literature, philosophy, and religious practices.

**REL 336(W) Zen** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/A. An inquiry into the teachings of Chinese and Japanese Zen in light of their Buddhist and Daoist backgrounds.

**PHILO 219 Asian Philosophies** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Prereq: one course in philosophy or perm instr. Readings from classics of Indian, Chinese, and Japanese philosophy drawn from the traditions of Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

**REL 256(W) Afro-Caribbean Religions** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C; PD/B. An introduction to the diversity of African-based religions in the Caribbean and beyond.

**AFPRL 220 African Spirituality in the Diaspora** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C; PD/A or B. The nature and expressions of the spiritual ethos enabling the survival of classical African human values in dehumanizing circumstances during and after enslavement in North America, South America and the Caribbean.

**AFPRL 322 African World View: Philosophy and Symbolic Thought** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Prereq: AFPRL 222 or perm instr. In-depth examination of African religious thought with emphasis on philosophical concepts that underlie African civilization.

**AFPRL 323 Islam and Christianity in Africa** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: AFPRL 222 or perm instr. Examination of relationship of Islam and Christianity to primary African religion, and their political role in African history.

**AFPRL 362 Folk Religion in Puerto Rico** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: AFPRL 141 or 243. Reading knowledge of Spanish suggested. Analysis of roots of folk religion in Indian, African, and Spanish cultures. Religious syncretisms, popular imagery, and ritual practices.

**AFPRL 420 The Black Church and Social Change** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: AFPRL 201 or 202 or perm instr. In-depth study of socio-political role of Black church in political struggle of Black people, with special emphasis on America.

**REL 252(W) Ancient Near Eastern Religions** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C. Study of Egyptian religion, religions of Sumer and Babylonia, religion of the early Hebrews (including the Old Testament).

**REL 255(W) Religions of Two Gods** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120. GER/2/C; PD/A. A survey of historical varieties of dualistic religion—both classical and modern—which inquires into the moral grounds for their recurring appeal.

**REL 253(W) Western Religions** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/2/C; PD/D. Survey of major Western religions—Christianity, Judaism, Zoroastrianism, and Islam.

**HEBR 240 Introduction to the Old Testament** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C; PD/A. Survey of the books of the Old Testament, their forms, content, and cultural background. Introduction to the tools and methods of modern biblical criticism.

**HEBR 259 Old Testament Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C; PD/A. Comprehensive survey of ancient Israelite religious practice, expression, and thought as reflected in Hebrew Bible.

**HEBR 286 Ancient Near Eastern Literature** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Comparative study of Ancient Near Eastern literature and Hebrew Bible.

**HEBR 292 Hebrew Prophets** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Study of phenomenon of prophecy in ancient Israel and its contribution to historical, ethical, and religious thought.

**HEBR 294(W) Job, Ecclesiastes, and the Human Predicament** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/3/A; PD/A. Study of form, content, and religious significance of these two enigmatic masterworks.

**HIST 210 History of Judaism** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Survey of Jewish religious tradition with attention to interactions between Judaism and other religions, and to role of Judaism in formation of Christianity and Islam.

**HIST 309 Jewish History in the Ancient World** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Not open to freshmen. Jewish people from origins to late antiquity; social and intellectual developments from Biblical to Talmudic eras.

**HIST 310 Jewish History in Medieval and Early Modern Periods** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/D. Not open to freshmen. Jewish people from late antiquity to 17th century; social and legal status under Islamic and Christian rulers; religious and intellectual movements.

**HIST 320 Jewish History in Modern World** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/D. Not open to freshmen. From 18th century to present: Enlightenment, emancipation, nationalism, and Jewish State; anti-Semitism and Holocaust; recent trends.

**CLA 303 Religion of Ancient Greece** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Ancient Greek religious experience: official rites, mystery cults, oracles, personal religious belief and practice.



**CLA 304(W) Pagans and Christians** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/D. Transformation of classical culture in late antiquity: religion, philosophy, mysticism, magic, astrology.

**REL 330(W) New Testament Religion** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120 GER/3/A. Scholarly consideration of religion of New Testament: the mystery of Jesus Christ, Paul's message, ethics, relation to the Law of Judaism, salvation theology, apocalyptic thinking.

**REL 323(W) Christianity** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/D. Analysis of the Christian religion which employs methodologies of the academic study of religion and which aims to uncover the unity of Christian faith embodied in its various expressions.

**REL 333(W) Christian Theology** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/D. An examination of key doctrines in Christian thought such as trinity, incarnation, existence of God, and grace.

**HIST 314 History of Christianity I** 3 hrs, 3 cr. From Jesus to Luther; mysticism, theology, monasticism, the Papal church and its critics.

**HIST 316 History of Religion in the United States** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Changing European churches and indigenous American sects: their architecture, leaders, and ideas.

**REL 322(W) Islam** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/A. Study of Islam, its development, history, literature, philosophy, and religious practices.

**REL 324(W) Islam and Buddhism** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Study of Islam and Buddhism, their founders, development, beliefs, rituals, and interaction.

**REL 337(W) Sufism** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120. GER/3/A; PD/A. A course on the esoteric or "mystical" dimension of Islam, known among Muslims as ta'awwuf, attending to the history, doctrine and metaphysics of the Sufi path.

**REL 254(W) Tribal Religions: From Australia to the Americas** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; PD/A or B. Study of indigenous religions of Pacific Islanders and North American Indians.

**REL 262 Special Topics: Religious Traditions** 3 hrs, 3 cr; Specialized study of specific religious traditions or groups of traditions. Different topic each time offered.

**REL 362 Special Topics: Religious Traditions** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Specialized study of specific religious tradition or groups of traditions. Different topic each time offered.

**REL 410 Independent Study in Religion** Hrs TBA, 1 to 6 cr. Prereq: perm chair; majors only. Individual research and writing on topic in religion under supervision of a religion professor.

**REL 450 Honors Seminar in Religion** Prereq: five courses in religion OR a major or CUNY-BA focus in religion AND permission of the instructor or Program in Religion director. Specialized study in religion. For religion majors or other advanced religion students. Different topic each time offered. May be taken a second or third time with another subject. One topic offered under REL 450 or 490 satisfies the course requirements for departmental honors.

**REL 490 Honors Tutorial in Religion** Hrs TBA, 3 or 6 cr. Prereq: perm chair; majors only. Individual research and writing on topic in religion under supervision of Religion Honors Committee. REL 490 or one topic offered under REL 450 satisfies the course requirements for departmental honors.

#### V. Related Courses

**ANTHC 306 Folklore and Myth** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Cultural and psychological functions and symbolic meanings.

**AFPRL 141 Puerto Rican Folklore** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Study of Puerto Rican folklore: traditional beliefs, legends, religious rites, and typical music.

**AFPRL 222 African Civilization** 3 hrs, 3 cr; PD/A. Introduction to study of African civilization from Afrocentric perspective.

**CHIN 111 Chinese Culture I** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C. Introduction to Chinese cultural tradition with emphasis on classical tradition. Lectures and readings in English.

**CHIN 112 Chinese Culture II** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C. Emphasis on modern transformation against background of classical tradition. Lectures and readings in English.

**CLA 101 Classical Mythology** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C; PD/D. Greek and Roman myth as represented in ancient art and literature, with emphasis on modern interpretations and theories.

**CLA 302(W) Comparative Backgrounds of Classical Mythology** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A; PD/D. Mythological systems that bear on classical myth, including Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Hittite, Ugaritic, and Celtic myths.

**HEBR 284 Images of Women in the Old Testament, in Translation** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Depiction of women in ancient Israelite prose and poetry. Close reading and analysis of texts in terms of literary techniques, cultural background, and ideological implications.

**HEBR 288 Ancient Hebraic Folklore** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C. Analysis and comparative study of folk beliefs, practices, and literature reflected in Hebrew Bible, apocryphal literature, and Rabbinic Aggada.

**HEBR 290 Biblical Archaeology** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C. Study of Biblical sources in translation in relation to major archaeological discoveries in Israel and Near East.

**HEBR 295 Ancient Hebraic Law** 3 hrs, 3 cr; GER/2/C. Historical and comparative study of Biblical and Rabbinic law.

**HEBR 296(W) The Dead Sea Scrolls, in English** 3 hrs, 3 cr. Prereq: ENGL 120; GER/3/A. Readings in the various genres of the scrolls; historical background of Qumran sect; significance of the scrolls for study of Judaism and Christianity.