Department of Religion
FALL 2014 COURSE GUIDE
Why Study Religion at Tufts?

To study religion in an academic setting is to learn how to think about religion from a critical vantage point. As a critical and comparative discipline, the study of religion provides a powerful set of tools for exploring other cultures and thinking about the world we live in. Students learn to ask pressing questions about the role religion plays in personal experience and human society; about the nature and origin of religion; and about the dynamic interplay among religion and other dimensions of human culture, from biology, sociology, and economy to psychology, politics, and gender.

The study of religion is central to a liberal arts education and provides excellent preparation for a wide range of careers from education, medicine, law, and the arts to social work, ministry, and foreign service. Through the critical study of religion students develop the kinds of critical thinking skills essential for responsible engagement in their community and the larger world. The study of religion is an ideal preparation for entrance into graduate programs in religious studies, theological studies, or seminary training.

The study of religion provides a wonderful complement to other majors and programs at Tufts such as History, Philosophy, Sociology, English and International Relations.

The Department of Religion at Tufts is dedicated to the exploration and critical analysis of religion as a central aspect of human history and culture. Courses seek to promote:

-Awareness of the diversity of religious experience around the globe and throughout history
-Empathetic engagement with the beliefs, texts, and practices of the world’s religions
-Mastery of a range of methods for studying religion
-Reflection on the role religion plays in shaping human customs, values, beliefs, and institutions.
REL 01  Introduction to Religion
Joseph Walser  1  T  9:00-11:30 AM
REL 21  Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
Peggy Hutaff  F+  TTh  12:00-1:15 PM
REL 36  A Global History of Christianity to the Middle Ages
Jennifer Eyl  E+  MW  10:30-11:45 AM  CLST HIST 9
REL 39  History of Religion in America to the Civil War
Heather Curtis  G+  MW  1:30-2:45 PM  CLST HIST 83, AMER 194-09
REL 45  Introduction to Buddhism
Joseph Walser  10  M  6:30-9:00 PM
REL 48  Introduction to Islam
Ken Garden  D+  TTh  10:30-11:45 AM
REL 99  Theory and Method in the Study of Religion
Elizabeth Lemons  D+  TTh  10:30-11:45 AM
REL 100  Religion and Film
Elizabeth Lemons  F+  TTh  12:00-1:15 PM
REL 107  Evangelicalism in America
Heather Curtis  2  W  9:00-11:30 AM  CLST HIST 173, AMER 180-05
REL 149  Rebels, Saints and Reformers: Religion in Colonial India
Brian Hatcher I+  MW  3:00-4:15 PM
REL 191-02  Secularism
Ken Garden  J+  TTh  3:00-4:15 PM
REL 191-03  Sexuality in Early Christianity
Jennifer Eyl  6  T  1:30-4:00 PM

Courses Co-Listed with Religion

REL 04  Art History to 1700  FAH 01
REL 05  Introduction to the Arts of Asia  FAH 05
REL 12  The Arts of Japan  FAH 12
REL 25/125  Medieval Architecture  FAH 25/125
REL 28/128  Medieval Art in the Mediterranean  FAH 28/128
REL 55  Technology & Jewish Oral Tradition  JS 55
REL 68  Martin Luther: The Man & His Era  GER 68; HIST 166
REL 73  Aspects of Sephardic Tradition  JS 73
REL 134  Myth, Ritual & Symbol  ANTH 132
REL 136  King David & the Israelite Monarchy  JS 136
REL 143  Sociology of Religion  SOC 143
Faculty

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Hinduism and Religion in Modern South Asia

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Buddhism and Religion in Ancient South Asia

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History of Christianity and American Religions

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Islam and Sufism

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Christian Studies

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Religion and Culture
Requirements

The Religion Major

Ten courses distributed as follows:

• Foundation Requirement
  After taking two courses in the department, students must take REL 99 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion.

• Diversity Requirement (four courses)
  Students should have exposure to at least four different religions traditions through classes in which four different traditions are taught, or through four courses, each focused on a different religious tradition, or through some combination thereof.

• Depth Requirement (three courses)
  Students must choose a religious tradition, the traditions of a geographical region, or a religious textual tradition and take at least three classes in that specialty. One of the three courses must be in the doctrinal (theological or philosophical) aspects of religion and two must be 100-level courses.

• Two Additional Courses
  The two courses can be listed or cross-listed within the department.

The Religion Minor

Five courses distributed as follows:

• Foundation Requirement
  After taking two courses in the department, students must take REL 99 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion.

• Diversity Requirement (three courses)
  Students should have exposure to at least three different religions traditions through classes in which three different traditions are taught, or through three courses, each focused on a different religious tradition, or through some combination thereof.

• Upper-division Requirement
  One other course at the 100-level that does not count for any of the above requirements.
Course Descriptions

REL 01  Introduction to Religion
Joseph Walser      1 T  9:00-11:30 AM

An introduction to the field of religion to give students an understanding of the basic elements of the subject. The focus this year will be on the various relationships between religion and political power. Through this lens, we will examine pivotal texts, doctrines and monuments in Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.

REL 21  Introduction to the Hebrew Bible
Peggy Hutaff      F+ TTh  12:00-1:15 PM

We will study the Hebrew Bible to become familiar with the works of its individual authors, and to gain an understanding of the historical circumstances in which they wrote, as well as to survey the historical development of ancient Israel’s religious beliefs and institutions. Topics will include the life of Moses, the production of Israel’s codes of law, the construction of theological language and imagery, the rise of the monarchy and the temple, accounts of creation, psalms and wisdom literature, and the lives and legacies of the Israelite prophets. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement and the Judaic Culture option.
REL 36  A GLOBAL HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY TO THE MIDDLE AGES
Jennifer Eyl  E+ MW 10:30-11:45 AM  CLST: HIST 9

Development of Christianity as a world movement from antiquity through the medieval period. Study of key figures, events, and issues that helped shape Christian traditions in a variety of cultural, social and historical contexts. This course counts toward the Humanities or Social Sciences distribution requirement.

REL 39  HISTORY OF RELIGION IN AMERICA TO THE CIVIL WAR
Heather Curtis  G+ MW 1:30-2:45 PM  CLST: HIST 83, AMER 16-02

This course is about religion in America from the arrival of European immigrants in the 16th and 17th centuries to the Civil War. We will study major figures, events and issues that have helped to shape American religious history, while paying particular attention to the ways that social and cultural contexts have influenced religious experience in different times and places. Throughout, we will ask how religion has impacted the history of the United States, and, conversely, how religious traditions have been transformed by American culture. Key topics and themes include encounter and colonization; revivalism and reform; church and state; gender and women’s history; spirituality and devotional life; slavery and race relations; immigration and ethnicity. This course counts toward the Humanities or Social Sciences distribution requirement.
REL 45  Introduction to Buddhism
Joseph Walser    10  M  6:30-9:00 PM

The history, doctrines, and practices of Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia. Philosophical theories of the Buddha, meditation, and Nirvana, plus aspects of Buddhist social and institutional history. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement and the South and Southeast Asian Culture option.

REL 48  Introduction to Islam
Ken Garden    D+  TTh  10:30-11:45 AM

Islam in its many facets. Pre-Islamic Arabia, the Prophet, the Qur’an, the prophetic traditions, tradition and customs, law, theology, major denominations, philosophy, and mysticism. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement, the World Civilization requirement, and the Middle Eastern Culture option.

REL 99  Theory and Method in the Study of Religion
Elizabeth Lemons    D+  TTh  10:30-11:45 AM

Prerequisites: 2 other religion courses, or permission of instructor
Required course for Religion majors and minors.

This seminar aims to enhance students’ ability to discuss and analyze theoretical and methodological issues in the academic study of religion. We will explore selected important modern texts that raise enduring questions about such issues as the nature of religious phenomena, their purpose in societies, and their comparability across cultures. In addition, we will consider recent work by scholars of religion that critiques earlier perspectives and/or raises new issues. Discussion of case studies will facilitate assessment of the benefits and liabilities of various methodological and theoretical perspectives. Through analysis of significant approaches and issues, students will develop an understanding of their own perspectives in relation to the field of religious studies. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.
Scholars of religion and culture argue that films are worthy of study as contemporary religious texts and rituals, given how they function in social and personal life. Some point to patterns of film spectatorship and engagement that mirror traditional ritual behavior, both corporate and private. Some view films as modern “myths,” stories that inspire and challenge, creating opportunities for ethical and philosophical conversation and action. Other scholars study films as carriers of “theologies,” worldviews that convey ultimate or deep meaning, and thus reinforce, challenge or re-imagine traditional perspectives. Still others analyze the production and distribution of films to unveil the circulation of messages that reinforce prevailing norms, practices and institutions (whether religious or not), or pose challenges to them. In every case, these approaches are enriched by attention to film as an art form and aspects of film theory. This course invites students to explore the rich terrain of film through the variety of approaches employed by religious studies scholars. We will open up films to explore their messages about contemporary religions and religious issues, as well as to gain a broader and deeper understanding of “religion” itself. Genres will include drama, comedy, animation, horror and science fiction. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.
REL 107  Evangelicalism in America
Heather Curtis  2 W 9:00-11:30 AM  CLST: HIST 173, AMER 180-05
Prerequisites: One lower-level course in the history of Christianity (REL 35 or 36) or one lower-level course in American Religious History (REL 40, 41, or 42), or permission.

This course explores the history of evangelical Christianity in and beyond North America from the seventeenth-century to the present. We will consider how and why evangelical traditions emerged in continental Europe and Great Britain, spread to the American colonies, flourished in the fledgling United States during the early national period, fractured and diversified around the turn of the twentieth century, and have continued to transform and expand into new global contexts over the last one hundred years. Throughout, we will pay attention to the ways in which evangelicalism has influenced American culture, politics, gender norms, constructions of racial identities, and class dynamics. We will also ask how cultural, political, and social forces have shaped evangelical theology and practice. Students will develop a command of the scholarly debates that animate the study of evangelicalism, and undertake independent, semester-long research projects grounded in primary source materials. This course counts toward the Humanities or Social Sciences distribution requirement.

REL 149  Rebels, Saints and Reformers: Religion in Colonial India
Brian Hatcher  I+ MW 3:00-4:15 PM

Seminar on religious change and colonial rule in India from the late 18th to the early 20th century. Students will explore a range of Hindu, Muslim, and Sikh movements and leaders in light of current critical scholarship. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement and the South and Southeast Asian Culture option.
REL 191-02  **Secularism**  
Ken Garden  
J+ TTh 3:00-4:15 PM

Do we live in a “Secular Age?” Can even the religious conceive of religion in a way that does not presuppose secularism? Is secularism as religiously neutral as its proponents claim? This course will explore the relationship between the secular and religious from the 18th century to the present. This course counts toward the Humanities distribution requirement.

REL 191-03  **Sexuality in Early Christianity**  
Jennifer Eyl  
6 T 1:30-4:00 PM

Exploration of the origin, expression and development of early Christian norms and practices regarding sexuality and the body. Emphasis will be placed on understanding early Christian attitudes toward such issues as desire, asceticism, gender, marriage, and same-sex love within the context of Greco-Roman antiquity; exploring the ways the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and other non-canonical texts were interpreted among early Christian groups; and mastering critical tools for the study of ancient Christianity, human sexuality, gender and religious identity.