

# 2009-2010 Course Catalog

The University Of Montana

---

## Religious Studies

- [Courses](#)
- [Faculty](#)

### **Paul A. Dietrich (Professor of Liberal Studies), Director**

The course of study for students interested in concentrating in the study of religion is a Liberal Studies major with a Religious Studies option. The academic study of religions is coextensive with the broad field of humane learning in which questions pertaining to the meaning of human existence are most prominent. The study of religions in the University is therefore taken up in close conjunction with the humanities, arts, letters, and the several sciences.

In course offerings, two emphases prevail: first, the scholarly analysis and transmission of the literature and forms of the world's religions; second, the sensitization of the student to the value of religious studies for appreciating his/her cultural and social existence. Thus, courses are designed to illuminate religious traditions in historical depth as they inform modern cultures generally, and the individual within American cultural situations in particular.

The offerings in Religious Studies do not constitute a pre-professional program. They are intended to extend and deepen the student's education in the liberal arts.

## Degree Requirements

Core Curriculum (courses numbered under 300)

Foreign Language, (Two years of a single foreign language) - 18-20 cr.

WRIT (ENEX 101) or equivalent - 3 cr.

Liberal Studies 151, (autumn or summer semester only) - 4 cr.

LS 152, (spring or summer semester only) - 4 cr.

LS 161 - 3 cr.

European Literature (including British) - 3 cr.

American Literature, including cross-listed and cognate courses in ENLT/LIT, MCLL, and LS) - 3cr.

European History (including British) - 3-4 cr.

American History - 3-4 cr

Native American Studies (NAS) or African-America Studies (AAS), including cross-listed and cognate courses in ANTH, GEOG/GPHY, SOC/SOCI) - 3 cr.

Asian Studies, (including cross-listed courses in ANTH, GEOG/GPHY, SOC/SCOI) - 3cr.

Philosophy (PHIL) or Political Science (PSC/PSCI) - 4 cr.

Three 200 Level Religion Courses

(At Least one (1) course in religions of Near Eastern/Mediterranean origin and one (1) in Religions of South Asian or East Asian origin and the third course in either category)

9 credits

Near Eastern/Mediterranean (Pick at least 1)

RELS 210 Intro to Old Testament/Hebrew Bible

RELS 211 Intro to New Testament

RELS 220 Judaism

RELS 225 Christianity

South or East Asian (Pick at least 1)

RELS 232 Buddhism

RELS 234 Hinduism

RELS 236 Chinese Religions

RELS 238 Japanese Religions

Upper-Division Requirements 27 credits

RELS 330 Theory & Method in the Study of Religion - 3cr

Seven (7) courses (21 credits) selected from among the following:

RELS/NAS 301 American Indian Religion & Philosophy

RELS 310 Topics in Biblical Studies

RELS 320 Ancient Judaism/Early Christianity

RELS 335 Western Religious Thought I: Ancient/Early Medieval

RELS 336 Western Religious Thought II: Late Medieval/Early Modern

RELS 353 Topics in South Asian Religions

RELS 354 Topics in East Asian Religions

RELS 360 Classics in Buddhist Literature

RELS 366 Tibetan Civilization

RELS 367 Approaches to the Study of Zen

RELS 368 Contemporary Buddhism in South & Southeast Asia

RELS 369 Contemplative Traditions of Asia

AAS 374 African-American Religious Experience

RELS 376 Contemporary Religious Thought

RELS 381 Comparative Ethics

AAS 450 Prayer and Civil Rights

RELS 400 Senior Capstone Seminar - 3cr.

## Courses

U = for undergraduate credit only, UG = for undergraduate or graduate credit, G = for graduate credit. R after the credit indicates the course may be repeated for credit to the maximum indicated after the R. Credits beyond this maximum do not count toward a degree.

### Religious Studies (RELS)

U 210H Introduction to Hebrew Bible/Old Testament and the History of Ancient Israel 3 cr. Introduction to the literature, history and religion of ancient Israel. This course investigates the development of biblical texts in their ancient contexts, and introduces students to biblical studies as a modern academic discipline. Historical, comparative, literary, anthropological, and archeological perspectives are employed to illuminate the world of the biblical authors. No prior knowledge of the Bible, Judaism, or Christianity required.

U 130S Sociology of Religious Cults 3 cr. Offered spring. Unconventional religious groups in American society. Topics include recruitment, conversion, commitment, defection, leadership, belief systems, organizational structure and change.

U 195 Special Topics Variable cr. (R-9) Experimental offerings of visiting professors, experimental offerings of new courses, or one-time offerings of current topics.

U 198 Internship Variable cr. (R-6) Prereq., consent of faculty supervisor and the Internship Services office. Extended classroom experience which provides practical application of classroom learning during placements off campus. A maximum of 6 credits of Internship (198, 298, 398, 498) may count toward graduation.

U 211 Introduction to New Testament Studies 3 cr. An introduction to the literature of the New Testament and to the social and intellectual world of its authors. Emphasis on the cultural-historical contexts of earliest Christianity (ancient Judaism, Greco-Roman history and religion). Students will be introduced to the diverse cultures and religions of the ancient Mediterranean and to modern scholarly methods used in studying the New Testament.

U 220 Judaism 3 cr. An introduction to Judaism as a religion and to the history of Jewish peoples from antiquity to modernity. This course surveys the development of key social movements, literary expressions, ritual practices, and guiding concepts in Jewish traditions during the ancient, medieval, early modern, and modern periods. Focus on topics of import and interest in contemporary American, European, and Middle Eastern Jewish life and thought.

U 225 Christianity 3 cr. Offered every other year. Introduction to the historical development of Christian thought and practice in the cultures of antiquity and the medieval and the modern periods.

U 232H Buddhism 3 cr. Offered autumn. A historical introduction to the development of Buddhist thought and practice in the cultures of Asia and the West.

U 233 Traditions of Buddhist Meditation 3 cr. Offered autumn. Prereq. or coreq., RELS 232H. A critical and phenomenological introduction to meditation as the Buddhist method of systematic inquiry into the nature of the mind and its role in the construction of experience.

U 234 Hinduism 3 cr. Offered spring even-numbered years. Same as AS and LS 365. Critical exploration of selected aspects of Hindu thought, narrative and practice, both in contemporary and historical perspective. Focus primarily on India, but with consideration of Hinduism's transformation and impact beyond South Asia.

U 236 Chinese Religions 3 cr. An exploration of the development of thought and practice in and the interactions between the major religious movements of Chinese religion: Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and fold religion/animism.

U 238 Japanese Religions 3 cr. Offered at least once every two years. An introductory exploration of Japan's unique religious synthesis of Buddhist, Shinto, Taoist, Confucian and folk/shamanistic traditions.

U 295 Special Topics Variable cr. (R-9) Experimental offerings of visiting professors, experimental offerings of new courses, or one-time offerings of current topics.

U 300 Theory and Method in the Study of Religion 3 cr. A Survey of theories and methods in modern study of religion. Readings and discussions of selected pre-modern and modern texts will introduce major thinkers, and theories in the study of myth, ritual, and other social and literary phenomena commonly associated with "religion." Overview of social-theoretical, historical, psychological, theological, phenomenological, and comparative approaches to the question, What is religion?

UG 301E American Indian Religion and Philosophy 3 cr. Prereq., lower-division course in Perspective 5 or consent of instr. Same as NAS 301E. A study of selected ethical belief systems; origins, world views; religious ceremonies and the way they have been affected by Western civilization.

U 310 Topics in Biblical Studies 3 cr. (R-6) Selected topics in Hebrew Bible (Old Testament) and New Testament studies. Focus varies from year to year. Topics include: Israelite religion; prophets and prophecy; Israelite history and historiography; ancient Gospels; the letters and communities of Paul; early biblical interpretation; history of the biblical text; archaeology, iconography, and biblical literature; religion and politics in the bible.

U 320 Ancient Judaism and Early Christianity 3 cr. (R6) Selected topics in the history and literature of ancient Judaism and early Christianity. Focus varies from year to year. Topics include; the emergence of Judaism and Christianity in the Greco-Roman World; Imperialism and religion in Persian, Greek, and Roman times; religions of the ancient Near East and Mediterranean; narratives of Jewish and Christian origins; the historical Jesus; Paul between Judaism and Christianity; the early rabbinic movement; the Dead Sea Scrolls.

UG 335 Western Religious Thought I 3 cr. Offered autumn. Selected studies in the intellectual history of western religions, alternating between studies of periods and seminal thinkers. Emphasis will be on the ancient and medieval periods.

UG 336 Western Religious Thought II 3 cr. Offered spring. Selected studies in the intellectual history of western religions, alternating between studies of periods and seminal thinkers. Emphasis will be on the late medieval and early modern periods.

U 353 Topics in South Asian Religions 3 cr. (R-6) Offered at least once every three semesters, no prerequisites. This course will examine select topics of central importance with respect to the history of interaction between the major religions (Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism, Jainism, Sikhism) of South Asia.

U 354 Topics in East Asian Religions 3 cr. (R-6) Offered at least once every three semesters, no prerequisites. This course will examine select topics of central importance with respect to the history of interaction between the major religions (Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism, and folk animism and shamanism) of East Asia.

UG 360 Classics of Buddhist Literature 3 cr. (R-6) Offered spring. Close reading of a selection of core Buddhist texts drawn from various Asian cultures and spanning the three main phases of the tradition.

U 366 Tibetan Civilization 3 cr. Offered at least once every two years. An exploration of the history and culture of a unique civilization that has influenced greatly the cultures of Himalayan, East, and South Asia. Special attention will be given to Tibetan religions, but these always will be explored within the context of the society's political, social, economic, and other cultural developments.

U 367 Approaches to the Study of Zen Buddhism 3 cr. Offered at least once every two years; no prerequisites. An exploration of both key developments in the history of Zen Buddhist thought and practice and the variety of ways that Zen has been studied by Western popular and academic cultures.

U 368 Contemporary Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia 3 cr. To be offered once every two years; no prerequisites. As with other major religions, modernity and globalization have presented profound challenges to Buddhist traditions. In this course we will explore various contemporary issues that have affected Theravada Buddhist societies--colonial and post-colonial revivalism, religious nationalism, women's rights and social reform--as case studies in some of the major ways in which religions have confronted modernity.

U 369 Contemplative Tradition of Asia 3 cr. Offered at least once every two years. An exploration of the rich and diverse approaches to mental transformation and cultivation of gnosis as developed by several of Asia's major religious traditions, such as Buddhism, Jainism, Hinduism, Taoism, and Confucianism.

UG 370 Mysticism 3 cr. (R-6) An inquiry into the literature and interpretation of mysticism in the major religious traditions. Each offering will focus on a specific tradition or period.

U 376 Contemporary Religious Thought 3 cr. (R-6) Offered alternate years. Study of selected major critical and constructive proposals in modern religious thought in various traditions.

UG 381E Comparative Ethics 3 cr. Prereq., lower-division course in Perspective 5 or consent of instr. An examination of models for cross-cultural study, concentrating on the formation and exercise of values in eastern cultures as approached from the standpoint of western students.

U 395 Special Topics Variable cr. (R-12) Experimental offerings of visiting professors, experimental offerings of new courses, or one-time offerings of current topics.

U 396 Independent Study Variable cr. (R-6)

UG 495 Special Topics Variable cr. (R-12) Experimental offerings of visiting professors, experimental offerings of new courses, or one-time offerings of current topics.

UG 496 Independent Studies 3 cr. (R-9) Prereq., consent of instr. Work on selected problems by individual students under direct faculty supervision.

## **Faculty**

### **Professors**

- Bradley Clough, Ph.D., Columbia University, 1998
- Paul A. Dietrich, Ph.D., University of Chicago, 1981 (Director)
- Nathaniel Levtow, Ph.D., Brown University, 2006

### Lecturer

- Mark Hanson, Ph.D., University of Virginia, 1993

### **Adjunct Faculty**

- Thomas R. Lee, Ph.D., University of California, 1979