

2010-2011 Course Catalog

The University Of Montana

Religious Studies

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

Religion has been taught as an academic discipline at The University of Montana since 1924. Located within the Liberal Studies Program in the College of Arts and Sciences, the study of religion is pursued at the University in an interdisciplinary setting that offers opportunities for exploration and discovery in many areas of the humanities, arts, and sciences. Our Religious Studies courses emphasize the scholarly analysis and interpretation of the history, literature, beliefs, myths, symbols, rituals, ethical and legal codes, and communities and institutions of the world's religious traditions. We investigate how the world's religions address enduring human questions and influence responses to daily problems, and we explore how religious traditions shape lives and societies, from the emergence of the earliest civilizations to twenty-first century global conflicts. Our students engage ideas about the good life and death, suffering and happiness, war and peace, revelation and salvation, God, mysticism, and religious experience. Our curriculum is designed to provide students with a broad and deep understanding of religion as a field of human activity and inquiry. Our students acquire the skills necessary to investigate specific religious traditions in historical depth and to understand the forms, expressions, and roles of religions in the world today.

More information is available at the Liberal Studies Program office in LA 101, (406) 243-2171 or online at www.cas.umt.edu/religious.

Degree Requirements

Lower-Division Requirements

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

WRIT 101, Composition (previously ENEX 101) or equivalent 3 cr.

Liberal Studies 151L, Introduction to Humanities (autumn or sum. semester only) 4 cr.

Liberal Studies 152L, Introduction to Humanities (spring or sum semester only) 4 cr.

Liberal Studies 161H, Introduction to Asian Humanities 3 cr.

Two 200-level Religion courses: At least one course in religions of Near Eastern/Mediterranean origin and one in Religions of South Asian or East Asian origin
6 cr.

Near Eastern/Mediterranean (Pick at least one course)

RLST 204H (RELS 210H), Introduction to the Hebrew Bible

RLST 205 (RELS 211), Introduction to New Testament Studies

RLST 221 (RELS 220), Judaism
RLST 225 (RELS 225), Christianity
South or East Asian (Pick at least one course)
RLST 232H (RELS 232H), Buddhism
RLST 234 (RELS 234), Hinduism
RLST 236 (RELS 236), Chinese Religions
RLST 238 (RELS 238), Japanese Religions
Upper-Division Requirements

i) RLST 300 (RELS 300), Theory & Method in the Study of Religion 3cr.

ii) Five courses (15 cr.) selected from among the following:

RLST 300 (RELS 301E)/NAS 301E, American Indian Religion and Philosophy

RLST 310 (RELS 310), Topics in Biblical Studies (R-6)

RLST 320 (RELS 320), Ancient Judaism/Early Christianity (R-6)

RLST 335 (RELS 335), Western Religious Thought I

RLST 336 (RELS 336), Western Religious Thought II

RLST 353 (RELS 353), Topics in South Asian Religions (R-6)

RLST 354 (RELS 354), Topics in East Asian Religions (R-6)

RLST 360 (RELS 360), Classics of Buddhist Literature (R-6)

RLST 366 (RELS 366), Tibetan Civilization

RLST 367 (RELS 367), Approaches to the Study of Zen Buddhism

RLST 368 (RELS 368), Contemporary Buddhism in South and Southeast Asia

RLST 369 (RELS 369), Contemplative Traditions of Asia

RLST 370 (RELS 370), Mysticism (R-6)

AAS 374, African-American Religious Experience

RLST 376 (RELS 376), Contemporary Religious Thought (R-6)

RLST 381E (RELS 381E), Comparative Ethics

AAS 450, Prayer and Civil Rights

•iii) Two Liberal Studies courses with Religious Studies content (for example, Liberal Studies 342, Topics in Comparative Literature and Religion) 6 cr.

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 (RLST)

U 130S (RELS 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 191 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 204H (RELS 106H/210H) Introduction to the Hebrew Bible 3 cr. Introduction to the literature and history of ancient Israel and to modern methods employed in studying Israel's religion as an academic discipline.

U 205 (RELS 107/211) Introduction to New Testament 3 cr. An introduction to the literature and history of early Christianity and to the scholarly methods used in studying the New Testament.

U 221 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 233) Traditions of Buddhist Meditation 3 cr. Offered autumn. Prereq. or coreq., RLST 232 H (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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 291 (RELS 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 (RELS 300/301E) 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?

U 310 (RELS 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 312 (RELS 312) Ancient Judaism/Early Christianity 3 cr. Offered alternate years. The life and letters of Paul; the structure of the Pauline understanding of the Christian faith; the legacy of Paul in later Christian thought.

U 320 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 (RELS 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 391 (RELS 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 392 (RELS 396) Independent Study Variable cr. (R-6)

UG 491 (RELS 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 492 (RELS 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