

RELIGION

PROFESSORS BECKLEY*, DAVIS, MARKS
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR BROWN
ASSISTANT PROFESSORS LUBIN, SULLIVAN

MAJOR

A major in **religion** leading to a Bachelor of Arts degree requires completion of at least 37 credits in religion as follows. A maximum of 15 credits at the 100-level may count toward major requirements.

1. Religion 103, 210, 431, and a thesis (Religion 473 or 493-493)
2. Either Religion 101 or 102
3. *Religious Traditions*: five additional courses chosen from the following, with at least two in each of two areas and one in the third area:
 - a. Asian Religions—Religion 130, 131, 132, 230, 231, 340; 195, 295 or 395 when appropriate
 - b. Christianity—Religion 150, 151, 152, 155, 250, 251, 255, 260, 350, 355; 195, 295 or 395 when appropriate
 - c. Islam and Judaism—Religion 105, 271, 272 (Literature in Translation 272), 275, 280, 370; 195, 295 or 395 when appropriate
4. *Methods and Issues in Religious Studies*: at least one course chosen from among Religion 110, 115, 200 (Sociology 200), 212 (Philosophy 212), 215, 216, 220, 221 (Sociology 221), 305, 310, 315 (Sociology 315)
5. Six additional credits in religion

HONORS: An Honors Program in religion is offered for qualified students; see department head for details.

NOTE: The religion courses are not listed numerically but rather according to the following scheme. Within the 100, 200 and 300 levels, the last two digits indicate the following groupings:

- 00-29 Methods and Issues
- 30-49 Asian
- 50-69 Christian
- 70-89 Islam and Judaism
- 90-99 Topics

INTRODUCTIONS

★RELIGION 100 (3)—Introduction to Religion

An introduction to academic approaches to the study of religion, and an examination of the nature of religion as expressed in the writings, rituals, doctrines, ethics, and social contexts of Western and non-Western religious communities. *Staff.*

Fall, Spring

★RELIGION 101 (3)—Hebrew Bible/Old Testament

An introduction to the history, literature and interpretation of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament). *Marks.*

Fall

★RELIGION 102 (3)—New Testament

An introduction to the history, literature and interpretation of the New Testament. *Staff.*

Fall, Winter

★RELIGION 103 (3)—Introduction to Asian Religions

A survey of the teachings, practices, and historical significance of Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shinto. *Staff.*

Fall

★RELIGION 105 (3)—Introduction to Islam and Judaism

An introductory examination and comparison of the history, literature, religious life, and social forms of Islam and Judaism, as well as contemporary challenges to each tradition. Issues in the general study of religion are also addressed. *Staff.*

Not offered in 1999-2000

★RELIGION 110 (3)—Introduction to American Religion.

An introduction to the modern study of religion through a consideration of the diversity of religious expression in the United States as seen in differences among periods of American history, geographic regions and populations. Attention is paid to the distinctive unifying themes and structural forms in American religious history, including a concern for nature, the invention of the denomination, and the legal structure of religious life in the United States. *Sullivan.*

Winter 2001 and alternate years

METHODS AND ISSUES

★RELIGION 115 (3)—Religion and Responsibility

Beginning in the 17th century, the concept of “response-ability” began to migrate from the courts to nearly all areas of ethical reflection. Today, “responsibility” has become one of the salient features of morality. This course examines the general nature of responsibility by reading critical works by Nietzsche, Weber, Kierkegaard and various 20th-century writers, and by studying religious texts from the Jewish, Christian, Hindu, Buddhist and Confucian traditions. *Davis.*

Winter 2001 and alternate years

★RELIGION 200 (Sociology 200) (3)—Religion and American Social Institutions

A study of religion in American society in relation to other fundamental social institutions—family, polity, economy, and education—with special attention to religion and politics. This course meets the general education requirement in social science only (area 6). *White.*

Winter 2000 and alternate years

★RELIGION 210 (3)—Approaches to the Study of Religion

Prerequisite: A course in religion or permission of the department; prospective majors and majors should take this course at the earliest opportunity. A study of approaches to understanding religious life and thought as found in selected writings in anthropology, philosophy, psychology, sociology, theology, and comparative religion. *Sullivan.*

Winter

*Director of the Shepherd Program for the Interdisciplinary Study of Poverty.



★**RELIGION 212 (Philosophy 212) (3)—Philosophy and Religion**

An exploration of selected issues such as mystical and numinous experiences and doctrines, theistic arguments, faith and reason, religion and morality, and religion and secularity.

Sessions.
Winter

★**RELIGION 215 (3)—Female and Male in Western Religious Traditions**

An investigation of views about the body, human sexuality, and gender in Western religious traditions, especially Judaism and Christianity, and of the influences of these views both on the religious traditions themselves and on the societies in which they develop. The course focuses on religion and society in antiquity and the Middle Ages but also considers the continuing influence of religious constructions of the body and sexuality on succeeding generations to the present. *Brown.*

Fall 1999 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 216 (3)—Sainthood in Four Traditions**

A survey of sainthood in a variety of religious contexts: Christian, Islamic, Hindu, Buddhist. The course asks: "What makes someone holy? How do saints behave? How and why are they worshipped?" Readings include sacred biographies (hagiographies), studies of particular traditions of saint worship, and interpretations of sainthood in both theological and cross-cultural perspectives. *Lubin.*

Fall 1999

★**RELIGION 218 (3)—Comparative Religious Ethics**

A study of religious and philosophical justifications of personal virtue and social justice in ancient Greece, India, China, and Japan. The course covers Hinduism, Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism, and Shintoism. *Davis.*

Not offered in 1999-2000

★**RELIGION 220 (3)—Interreligious Dialogue**

Prerequisite: One course in religion. This course examines the literature of encounter between religious communities in order to illuminate ways in which they have rejected other traditions as well as sought understanding and cooperation. Texts come from Christian, Buddhist, Jewish, Hindu, and Muslim writers. *Marks.*

Spring 2001

★**RELIGION 221 (Sociology 221) (3)—Sociology of Religion**

Theories of the origin and functions of religion; institutionalization of religious belief, behavior, and social organization; conditions in which religion maintains social stability and/or generates social change. This course meets the general education requirement in fine arts, history, philosophy, and religion only (area 4). *White.*

Fall

★**RELIGION 305 (3)—Religion and Law**

Prerequisite: Three credits in religion or permission of the instructor. An examination of encounters between religious and legal discourses, ideas and institutions, using religious and legal materials from a variety of sources and historical periods, including judicial opinions, trial transcripts, and legislative and administrative materials. *Sullivan.*

Spring 2000 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 310 (3)—Perspectives on Death and Dying**

This course compares the way various religious traditions conceive of death, the afterlife, and the proper human response to death. It also approaches the topic through some readings from the social sciences and world literature. *Marks.*

Winter 2000 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 315 (Sociology 315) (3)—Seminar in the Sacred and the Social**

Prerequisite: Permission of the instructor. This seminar examines theoretical issues raised by the study of religion, values and society through a study of the sociology of Max Weber and Ernst Troeltsch and the religious and philosophical background of their work. This course meets the general education requirement in fine arts, history, philosophy and religion only (area 4). *Davis.*

Spring

ASIAN RELIGIONS

★**RELIGION 130 (3)—Religions of India**

This course introduces the central themes and ideals of the Hindu and Buddhist traditions as they developed in India. Students read important texts (devotional poetry, mystical instruction, myths and legends) and study ways in which Hindus and Buddhists have worshiped and sought to live religious lives. Topics include different Indian conceptions of the divine in the world; how Hindus and Buddhists have understood the human condition; and the role of religion in Indian society, past and present. *Lubin.*

Winter 2001 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 131 (3)—Buddhism**

A survey of Buddhism with special emphasis on Buddhist ethics and social movements. After a brief consideration of the Hindu origins of Buddhism, the course focuses on the development of the Theravada, Vajrayana and Mahayana traditions. A class trip to at least one Buddhist center is included. *Davis.*

Winter

★**RELIGION 132 (3)—God and Goddess in the Hindu Religion**

This course explores the many ways in which Hindu visualize and talk about the divine and its manifestations in the world using mythic stories, images in worship, explanations of the nature of the soul and body in relation to the divine, and the belief in human embodiments of the divine in Hindu holy men and women. Topics include: the religious meanings of masculine and feminine in the divine and human contexts; the idea of local, family and "chosen" divinities; and forms of Hindu devotion for men and women. *Lubin.*

Winter 2000 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 230 (3)—Religion and Society in China and Japan**

A survey of the main religious and philosophical traditions of China and Japan (including Confucianism, Taoism, Buddhism and Shinto) from pre-history to the present. The class reads primary texts representing the main Chinese and Japanese traditions and will relate them to the historical development of East Asian civilization. *Davis.*

Fall 1999 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 231 (3)—Yogis, Ascetics and Divine Incarnations in Indian Religions**

Indian yogis, monks and ascetics pursue extraordinary paths that invert the normal aims and values of society. This course surveys the teachings on spiritual training and self-cultivation developed in India, their conceptual basis, the range of techniques used, and their philosophical development in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism. Questions addressed include the purpose of these teachings and for whom they were designed, and the roles yogis and ascetics play in religious life and their ethical status in the world. *Lubin.*

Winter 2000 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 340 (3)—Seminar in Asian Religion**

Prerequisite: One course in Asian Religion or permission of the instructor. A study of specific topics in Asian religion and society. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. Topic for 2000: **Sin and Evil in India.** This course examines Indian ideas of good and evil, purity and pollution, innocence and guilt, with special emphasis on the categories of personal and moral defects, the means available for removing them, the role of myths and legends in addressing moral dilemmas and ambiguities and the varying weight given to intention. The sources include ritual, mythological, legal and philosophical works and ethnographical descriptions of modern Indian society. The aim is to understand the Indian perspectives by contrasting them with Western points of view and thus to place them in the broader context of ethical thought. *Lubin.*

Spring.

CHRISTIANITY

★**RELIGION 150 (3)—Christian Ethics and Moral Problems**

A study of Christian perspectives upon a particular moral problem or problems. Especially designed to introduce freshmen and sophomores to Christian theological and ethical reflections as related to moral issues. *Beckley.*

Not offered 1999-2000

★**RELIGION 151 (3)—History of Christian Theology and Ethics**

An introduction to diverse Christian ideas about God and God's relation to the world, and the interaction between these ideas and the moral practices and social institutions that have developed among Christians. This study includes readings from primary sources beginning with both testaments of Christian scripture and concluding with some 20th-century theological proposals. *Staff.*

Winter 2001 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 152 (3)—Modern Christianity**

This course begins with an examination of various periodizations of modernity and an examination of the roots of the modern churches in the Renaissance, Protestant and Catholic Reformations, the Counter-Reformation, and the Enlightenment. The development of modern churches is traced through the 19th and 20th centuries with a view to understanding the distinctiveness of different institutional and theological developments, giving special attention to the spread of Christianity outside Europe and North America. *Sullivan.*

Fall

★**RELIGION 155 (3)—Theology and Ethics of Martin Luther King, Jr.**

A study of selections from the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr., in the context of King's leadership of the civil rights movement and the changing political, economic, and intellectual milieu in which he acted and thought. Moral issues such as political obligation and civil disobedience, nonviolent resistance, and political and economic justice are considered. *Beckley.*

Next offered 2003-2004

★**RELIGION 250 (3)—Early Christian Thought: Orthodoxy and Heresy**

Prerequisite: Religion 102 or permission of the instructor. An exploration of the uncertain boundaries between orthodoxy and heresy in early Christian movements. Questions addressed include, "Who decides what is orthodox and what is heretical, how are these decisions made, and what impact do they have on institutional structures?" "What perennial problems in Christian theology emerge in the early debates about orthodoxy and heresy, and how are those problems being addressed today?" Readings include selections from the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament, "gnostic gospels" and other so-called heretical texts, writings from the Church Fathers (with special attention to St. Augustine) and recent scholarly treatments of orthodoxy and heresy. *Brown.*

Fall 2000 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 251 (3)—American Catholicism**

This course considers the history and experience of the Roman Catholic church in America, from the first French and Spanish missionaries, through the rise of the largely Irish and German immigrant church in the 19th century, to the coming of age of the American Catholic community and its response to Vatican II. Attention is given to the theology, ritual forms, and cultural style of Catholic religious practice and to the history of the Catholic community and its participation in the public life of the larger American community. *Sullivan.*

Winter 2000 and alternate years

★**RELIGION 255 (3)—Contemporary Christian Theology and Ethics**

A critical examination of selected Protestant and Roman Catholic theologians and ethicists, especially their understandings of God, Jesus Christ, human nature, and morality. *Staff.*

Winter

★**RELIGION 260 (3)—Seminar in the Christian Tradition**

An introduction to perduring issues in Christian theology and ethics through study of one or more of the classical Christian theologians. *Staff.*

Spring

★**RELIGION 350 (3)—Seminar in Biblical Studies:**

Prerequisite: Religion 102 or permission of the instructor. An exploration of a topic in Biblical studies, focusing on ancient texts and their interpreters from antiquity to the present. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. Topic for 2000: To be announced. *Staff.*

Spring

★RELIGION 355 (3)—Seminar in Christian Ethics

Prerequisite: Religion 150, 155, or 201 or permission of the instructor. A focus upon particular problems, themes or authors in Christian theological ethics. *Beckley.*

Not offered in 1999-2000

ISLAM AND JUDAISM**★RELIGION 271 (3)—Judaism**

A study of writings selected from the rabbinic, medieval, and modern periods of Jewish history to investigate central aspects of the Judaic religious and intellectual tradition, and their place in contemporary debates among Jews in the US and Israel. Texts illumine such issues as the conflict between tradition and change and between reason and faith, types of "knowledge" about God, gender roles, dialogue with other religions, faith after the Holocaust, and meanings of ritual and law. *Staff.*

Fall

**★RELIGION 272 (Literature in Translation 272) (3)
—Modern Jewish Literature in Translation**

Readings in the works of 20th-century authors such as Wiesel, Singer, and Israeli poets and novelists. The writings are studied as literary responses to the historical and religious crises of modern Jewish life in Europe, the United States, and Israel. This course meets the general education requirement in literature only (area 3). *Marks.*

Next offered in 2001-2002

★RELIGION 275 (3)—Contemporary Jewish Thought

A study of Jewish religious movements and representative philosophical and religious writings of the last two centuries. *Staff.*

Winter 2001 and alternate years

★RELIGION 280 (3)—Islam

An exploration of the religious dimension of current events and debates in the Muslim world from the perspective of the history of Islam's religious ideas and forms, literature, social theory, mysticism, and its varying cultural expressions. *Marks.*

Not offered in 1999-2000

★RELIGION 370 (3)—Seminar in Judaism

An exploration of a particular topic in Judaic Studies. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. *Marks.*

Not offered 1999-2000

TOPICS**★RELIGION 195 (3)—Special Topics in Religion**

A course offered from time to time in a selected problem or topic in religion. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. Topic for 1999: To be announced. Topic for Fall 2000: **Inventing Christmas.** An exploration of Christmas as a transnational religious, political and social phenomenon using historical, literary and anthropological/sociological resources. *Staff.*

★RELIGION 295 (3)—Special Topics in Religion

Prerequisite will vary according to the topic. A course offered from time to time in a selected problem or topic in religion. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. Topic for 2000: To be announced. *Staff.*

Winter

★RELIGION 395 (3)—Advanced Seminar in Religion

Prerequisite will vary according to the topic. An advanced seminar offered from time to time, depending on student interest and staff availability, in a selected problem or topic in religion. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. *Staff.*

Offered when interest is expressed and departmental resources permit.

**RELIGION 401 (1), 402 (2), 403 (3)—Directed
Individual Study**

Subject to departmental approval and available departmental resources, this course provides an opportunity for individuals to pursue significant lines of independent study in the field of religion. May be repeated for degree credit with permission and if the topics are different. *Staff.*

RELIGION 431 (1)—Senior Thesis Preparation

Prerequisite: Senior religion major or permission of the department. In consultation with a faculty adviser, students select a thesis topic, work with a member of the library staff to learn requisite research skills and to develop an annotated bibliography for their thesis, and write a prospectus for the thesis to be completed in the winter term. *Library staff and all Religion faculty.*

Fall

RELIGION 473 (3)—Senior Thesis Seminar

Prerequisite: Senior religion major or permission of the department. Students explore specialized issues in religious studies through writing a thesis on a topic chosen in consultation with a faculty adviser and through seminar discussions of papers presented to the department faculty and other members of the class. *All Religion faculty.*

Winter

RELIGION 493 (3-3)—Honors Thesis

Fall-Winter