

# Spring 2025 Course Descriptions

**Philosophy, Religious Studies, and Humanities**

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## Is Philosophy a Great Major for YOU?

The WVU Philosophy Department is an intellectually vibrant department, with an energetic faculty devoted to outstanding research, teaching, and service. We offer a BA in Philosophy and minors in Religious Studies (both a regular and an online option), Applied Ethics, and Philosophy. We have a well-earned reputation for outstanding undergraduate teaching and mentoring that is comparable to a top-tier liberal arts college. Our faculty also have a well-earned reputation for producing research that is comparable to our peers at R1 institutions with PhD programs.

We have a long and distinguished tradition of student success and fulfillment. Our graduates include an impressive number of members of Phi Beta Kappa, Truman Scholars, Fulbright Scholars, Eberly Scholars, Neil S. Bucklew Scholars, Mountaineers of Distinction, a Newman Civic Fellow, and a recipient of the Charles B. Rangel International Affairs Graduate Fellowship. Our students are gaining admission, often with generous funding, to top graduate programs, law schools, and medical schools.

If you are a person who wants to live a purposeful and meaningful life, the study of philosophy will be valuable, interesting, and deeply enjoyable for you. Philosophy students have the opportunity to grapple with deep questions and pressing contemporary problems about ourselves, our societies, and our world. How should we live our lives? What are our ethical obligations toward others? What is a just society? Are race and gender social constructs? Is time real? Is consciousness a purely physical phenomenon? Do human beings have free will? Is it possible to know anything? Students practicing philosophy often come up with enlightening answers to those questions and learn to support their answers with sound reasoning.

Beyond the personal satisfaction of engaging in a careful study of life's big questions, the study of philosophy prepares students for employment in fields that demand sophisticated critical thinking skills, clear communication of complex ideas, and the ability to deal effectively with ambiguity. The analytical and communication skills emphasized in philosophy are a valuable asset in many satisfying careers, including law, health care, education, politics, public policy, counseling, and business. As you probably know already, philosophy students consistently score exceptionally well on standardized exams such as the LSAT, GRE, MCAT, and GMAT.

Data collected by PayScale.com and shared by the World Economic Forum compared mid-career salaries among graduates from 20 different undergraduate majors. Philosophy came in 5th place, earning the highest rating among all humanities majors, all social science majors, all business majors (except economics), and several STEM majors. PayScale.com also collected data on starting salaries among 50 different majors and philosophy majors ranked #16. These data demonstrate that philosophy offers a great return on investment that is comparable to engineering.

For more info, contact:

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# Philosophy Major Requirements, BA

<b>Basic Core Requirements</b> Phil 244, Phil 248, Phil 260
<b>Philosophy Upper-Division Courses</b>  <u>Select one of the Following:</u> Phil 301 or Phil 302  <u>Select one of the Following:</u> Phil 321 or 332 or Phil 346
<b>Philosophy Upper-Division Electives</b> Select 9 hours at the 300 Level or Above in Philosophy
<b>Philosophy General Electives</b> Any PHIL Course at the 100-level or above
<b>Capstone Experience</b> PHIL 480 or PHIL 496

## **Philosophy Minor Requirements**

The Philosophy minor is designed to acquaint students with a broad range of philosophical topics and skills, and to introduce them to the fundamental issues in philosophy. The minor consists of fifteen hours in Philosophy, with at least nine hours at the upper level (300 level or above). A grade of C- or higher must be earned in all courses counted toward the minor.

## **Religious Studies Minor Requirements**

The Religious studies Minor gives all WVU students the opportunity to explore the world through a careful and respectful study of various religions, histories, and cultures. In addition to a well-rounded list of exciting on campus and online course offerings, the Program leads many outstanding study abroad adventures throughout the year. For more information, contact Dr. Alyssa Beall @ Alyssa.Beall@mail.wvu.edu.

A Minor in religious studies is an ideal addition for any student who would like to better understand humanity, the depths of current world events, the complexity of religious ideas, cultures, and practices. A minor in Religious Studies prepares you for careers in politics, history, public policy, ministry, theology, and many other fields. The course work develops critical thinking and research skills that will serve you well in law school and medical school. Students choosing the Religious Studies minor will coordinate with an advisor to design 15 hours of coursework within Religious Studies that best represents the student's interests within the minor. Students must earn a minimum grade of C in all courses applied to the minor.

- Course requirements: The minor consists of 15 hours of coursework in religious studies (any RELG courses), with at least 9 hours at the upper-level (300-level or above).
- With Department Chair approval, PHIL 308, 309, or 314 may be used to satisfy the upper-level course requirements for the minor in RS.

# **Applied Ethics Minor Requirements**

<b>Core Courses</b>		<b>6</b>
Phil 130	Current Moral Problems	
Phil 321	Ethical Theory	
or Phil 346	History of Ethics	
<b>APPLIED THEORY*</b>		<b>6</b>
Select two of the following:		
Phil 313	Philosophy of Race	
Phil 314	Philosophy of Sex and Gender	
Phil 315	Free Will and Moral Responsibility	
Phil 331	Health Care Ethics	
Phil 332	Environmental Ethics	
<b>SPECIFIC AREA OF PRACTICE *</b>		<b>3</b>
Select one of the following:		
Phil 285	Ethics Bowl	
Phil 491	Professional Experience	
Phil 497	Research	
<b>Total Hours</b>		<b>15</b>

Students must have completed at least 6 credits in the minor before being eligible to complete the Specific Areas of Practice requirement. A grade of C- or higher must be earned in all courses counted toward the minor.

\* With the approval of the Philosophy Department, students may substitute up to one relevant course in philosophy or another department and apply it toward the Applied Theory or the Specific Area of Practice.

# Philosophy Course Descriptions

Philosophy 100 satisfies area 5 of the GEF

**PHIL 100**                      **Problems of Philosophy**                      **3 hr**  
**Devin Curry**

This course is an introduction to philosophy by way of a whirlwind tour of problems in ethics and the philosophy of mind. We'll begin by acquiring basic tools of logical thinking, and then use those tools to grapple with puzzles about truth, bullshit, consciousness, free will, moral partiality, and the meaning of life. By the end of the course, we will have studied many (though not nearly all) of the big questions that make up the subject matter of philosophy. We may not walk away with satisfactory answers to these questions, but we will develop a deeper understanding of both the questions themselves and various possible ways of answering them.

**PHIL 100**                      **Problems of Philosophy**                      **3 hr**  
**Geoff Georgi**

This course is an introduction to philosophy via one of the most important texts in the history of the philosophical tradition: Plato's *Republic*. Plato's great dialogue focuses on the question of "justice" or *dikaio sunē* and hence is primarily concerned with problems of ethics (how should I live? what should I do? what kind of person should I work to become?). In the course of the dialogue, however, Socrates and his interlocutors devote significant attention to virtually every area of philosophy, including metaphysics, epistemology, logic, aesthetics, political philosophy, philosophy of mind (psychology or philosophical anthropology), the philosophy of education, medical ethics, and the philosophy of sex and gender. By engaging actively with the arguments in the text, students will receive an introduction to philosophy not only as a contemporary academic discipline, but also as a practice of critical reflection and engagement with the world around them.

Philosophy 130 satisfies area 5 of the GEF

**PHIL 130**                      **Current Moral Problems**                      **3 hr**  
**David Hoinski**

This course will focus on democracy—in particular, American democracy—as a moral problem. Our focus will be on (1) what democracy is or is supposed to be, (2) the nature and importance of equality for democracy, and (3) how to address the related problems of poverty and homelessness insofar as these conditions constitute obstacles to equality and hence to a more fully realized democracy. There will be four required texts for the course: Astra Taylor's *Democracy May Not Exist, but We'll Miss It When It's Gone*, Danielle Allen's *Our Declaration: A Reading of the Declaration of Independence in Defense of Equality*, Reverend Dr. William J. Barber's *White Poverty: How Exposing Myths About Race and Class Can Reconstruct American Democracy*, and Ronald R. Sundstrom's *Just Shelter: Gentrification, Integration, Race, and Reconstruction*. In addition to the central topics of the course, students will learn essential philosophical and religious ethical theories including human rights theory, contract theory, utilitarianism (and other forms of consequentialism), and Kantian ethics, amongst others. This is a course in practical or applied ethics because the goal is ultimately to reinforce and enhance (American) democracy.

**PHIL 130**                      **Current Moral Problems**                      **3 hr**  
**Ariane Nomikos**

This course will examine several contentious moral issues of the day using the tools of philosophy. Among the topics that may be discussed are abortion, capital punishment, climate change, euthanasia, distributive justice, global poverty, human enhancements, immigration, mass incarceration, online dating, policing, procreation, reparations, sex work, and vegetarianism. Some of the specific issues we consider will be predetermined by the professor; others will be selected based on student interest. To set up our engagement with these issues, whatever they may be, we will begin the course with an introduction to some basic terminology in ethics and a brief survey of some major moral theories.

**PHIL 130**                      **Current Moral Problems**                      **3 hr**  
**Matthew Talbert**

This class will begin by introducing students to fundamental questions in ethics such as those having to do with ethical relativism and the relationship between ethics and God. Next, students will be introduced to several theories about what makes actions right or wrong. These ethical theories will be applied to contemporary debates concerning issues such as abortion, animal rights, euthanasia, and distributive justice.

Philosophy 147 area 6 of the GEF

**PHIL 147**                      **Philosophy and Film**                      **3 hr**  
**David Cerbone**

This course provides an introduction to philosophical questions and problems using the medium of film. We will be viewing a variety of films over the course of the semester to consider how they frame, develop, and enact philosophical ideas pertaining to the nature of reality and our knowledge of it, the nature of the self and personal identity, the character of contemporary society and technology, and the meaning and value of life. The films we view will be accompanied by a variety of readings from the Western philosophical tradition.

Philosophy 170 area 5 of the GEF

**PHIL 170**                      **Intro to Critical Reasoning**                      **3 hr**  
**Gary Ciocco**

An introduction to skills of critical reasoning; the structure of deductive and inductive arguments; recognition of common formal and informal fallacies; application of reasoning skills to textbooks, news articles, editorials, advertisements, political speeches, and other arguments in ordinary language. We will also emphasize the importance of induction and role of language in our acquisition of knowledge and our understanding of arguments and issues.

**PHIL 206**  
**Devin Curry**

**Brains, Minds and Experiments**

**3 hr**

This course is an introduction to the philosophy of neuroscience, psychology, and artificial intelligence. (Students are not required to have any prior experience studying philosophy or the mind/brain sciences before enrolling in the course.) We'll begin by examining a cutting-edge theory according to which our brains are designed to be almost exclusively future-oriented: predicting and even creating our realities. We'll then discuss the hugely influential theory that the brain is a computer, scrutinize the popular claim that men and women have fundamentally different sorts of brains, and question whether neuroscience proves that empathy means literally feeling somebody else's pain. We'll try to figure out why it's so damn hard to understand what's going on in the minds of nonhuman animals. We'll probe the nature of memory, emotion, and that little voice in your head. Finally, we'll ask whether large language models like ChatGPT mean what they say, what it would mean for a machine to become generally intelligent, and how AI tools might undermine the psychiatric treatment of mental disorders.

Philosophy 248 area 5 of the GEF

**PHIL 248**  
**David Hoinski**

**History of Modern Philosophy**

**3 hr**

Modern western philosophy is a broad historical category that covers roughly the period from 1600 to 1900 in European philosophy and is often further divided into early modern philosophy and late modern philosophy, with 1781 (the publication year of the first edition of Kant's Critique of Pure Reason) frequently cited as the turning point. This course will cut across the early/late divide because we will be studying arguments pertaining to god, religion, and morality in the works of René Descartes, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Johann Gottlieb Fichte, and Blaise Pascal (in this not altogether chronological order). Students will learn some of the major arguments for the existence of god as well as about the nature of god (or the gods), about our ability to know god (or the gods) through reason, about the relation of reason to faith, and about the role of revelation in religious belief. This course thus serves as both an excellent introduction to modern philosophy and as an outstanding complement to the philosophy of religion.

Philosophy 260 area 3 of the GEF

**PHIL 260**  
**Geoff Georgi**

**Intro to Symbolic Logic**

**3hr**

This course is an introduction to contemporary formal (or symbolic) logic. Historically, the study of logic originated with Aristotle and the Stoic philosophers of ancient Greece. Discoveries in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, led to a far more sophisticated understanding of logic. Thanks to these developments, formal logic is now central to many disciplines, including computer science, linguistics, mathematics, and philosophy. More generally, an understanding of the basic concepts of formal logic is indispensable for reasoning critically on any topic.

Philosophy 301 satisfies GEF 5  
PR: 3 hours of philosophy.

**PHIL 301**

**Metaphysics**

**3 hr**

**Geoff Georgi**

This course is an introduction to contemporary analytic metaphysics. Metaphysics deals with some of the oldest and most basic questions in philosophy: what kinds of things exist? What is the status of the categories we use to think and talk about things that exist? What is the nature of time and space? What is change? What is it for one thing to cause another? What is it for some things to exist necessarily, while other things exist only contingently? Analytic metaphysics approaches these classic questions using the tools of rigorous argument, analysis, and intuition.

Philosophy 315  
Pre-Requisite: 3 hours of Philosophy

**PHIL 315**

**Free Will and Moral Responsibility**

**3hr**

**Daniel Miller**

It's widely held that, if we don't have free will, then we can never be morally responsible for anything that we do. And if that's true, then it would seem that it would never be appropriate to praise, blame, reward, or punish anyone for anything. But what *is* free will, and what is required for it? Some philosophers have argued that, if all of our actions are completely determined by prior causes, then we cannot have free will, and therefore cannot be responsible for anything. Other philosophers have argued that, even if our actions are completely determined, we can still be free and morally responsible. Who's right? And, if it turns out that we don't have free will, can our lives still be meaningful? This course surveys various perspectives and arguments concerning the nature of free will while also engaging with different accounts of what it means to be morally responsible for who we are and what we do.

Philosophy 321 satisfies area 5 of the GEF  
Pre-Requisite- 3 hrs. philosophy

**PHIL 321**

**Ethical Theory**

**3 hr**

**Matthew Talbert**

Students will be introduced to perspectives in metaethics and normative ethics. Metaethics is concerned with the fundamental nature of morality and the significance of moral claims. Normative ethical theories articulate standards for judging whether an action is right or wrong. Through consideration of various normative positions, such as consequentialism and Kantian ethics, we will be able to pursue more abstract topics in moral philosophy (such as the reputed distinction between doing and allowing). This course will involve significant amounts of writing and classroom discussion, and it is hoped that, besides providing a detailed introduction to metaethics and normative ethics, this class will also help students improve their ability to speak and write clearly about abstract topics.



Philosophy 325 satisfies GEF 5  
PR – 3 Hr. Philosophy or Pre-Law student

**PHIL 325**                      **Philosophy of Law**                      **3 hr**  
**Scott Davidson**

The central aim of this course is to teach students how to think like a lawyer. First, we will examine the question: What is law? When philosophers turn their attention to this question, they want to know what features are distinctive to law as law. The course thus begins with a study of some of the most influential answers to this question, such as natural law, legal positivism, American legal realism, and so on. After studying those theoretical paradigms, the course will turn to the topic of legal reasoning. Through the study of landmark cases, we will examine the role of reason in constitutional interpretation and construction. Students will learn how to think like a lawyer by carefully analyzing and evaluating complex legal arguments. Mastery of the common types of legal argument will prepare students for law school and more broadly to navigate complex and deeply contested topics of public concern.

Philosophy 331 satisfies area 5 of the GEF  
Pre-Requisite – 3 hours of Philosophy or Pre-Med or Health Science Student

**PHIL 331**                      **Health Care Ethics**                      **3 hr**  
**Daniel Miller**

The course provides a framework for the ethical principles and concepts at work in medical decision-making, including the nature of rights, autonomy, justice, benefit, and harm. It explores difficult and controversial issues that arise in healthcare ethics, including autonomy and informed consent, life-sustaining treatment, reproduction, conscientious objection, justice and health care, and emerging technologies. Questions include: What does consent involve, and to what extent must a patient be informed about what they consent to? How can we balance competing rights among patients, their families, and health care providers? How should we make medical decisions concerning patients who fail to meet the standards of competence but lack an advance directive? To what degree should we prioritize the life of a fetus? Is healthcare a moral right? Would it be permissible for parents to genetically enhance their children?

**PHIL 341**                      **Philosophy and Death**                      **3 hr**  
**David Cerbone**

Whether we like it or not, all of us will (eventually, someday, inevitably) die. While this course cannot change that, it may change how you think about that inevitable eventuality. Over the course of the semester, we will examine a variety of philosophical questions and arguments pertaining to our mortality. We will start by considering views that make our earthly demise only a transition rather than an end by arguing for the immortality of the soul. In thinking about the adequacy of these arguments, we will also consider both the coherence and desirability of living forever (whether by continuing to exist after our worldly deaths or by never dying in the first place). In the second part of the course, we will examine questions and views oriented around the finality of death: Is death something to fear? What role does death play in contemplating the question of life's meaning? If death marks the absolute end of my existence, does that in some way deprive

my life of meaning? In the final part of the course, we will examine a very different take on the idea of an afterlife by considering the ways in which the continued existence of others after my death affects the meaning of my life. Throughout the course, we will be reflecting on the status of our mortality: is it merely a contingent feature of our existence or is it rather in some way essential or constitutive of being the kind of beings we are? Readings will be drawn from classical sources (Plato, Epicurus, and Lucretius), the continental tradition (Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus), recent and contemporary work in Anglo-American (or analytic) philosophy (Bernard Williams, Thomas Nagel, John Fischer, Samuel Scheffler), as well as more “hybrid” approaches (Martin Hägglund).

**PHIL 354**                      **Themes/Continental Philosophy**                      **3 hr**  
**David Hoinski**

Continental philosophy grows out of the traditions of phenomenology and existentialism as well as Marxism, (Freudian and Lacanian) psychoanalysis, and so-called structuralism in linguistics, anthropology, and other fields. A central theme of continental philosophy going back at least to Hegel’s master/slave dialectic is intersubjectivity, which will be the central focus of this course. More broadly, we will be studying the interrelated themes of intersubjectivity, ethics, and ontology, first of all from within the conceptual, narrative framework developed by Emmanuel Levinas. We will then proceed to study Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, which amongst other things seeks to explode the traditional psychoanalytical conception of intersubjectivity as rooted in the Oedipus complex. Jacques Derrida’s *Politics of Friendship* will allow us to explore the concept of friendship in relation to its others such as hostility and enmity, and finally we will study Alenka Zupančič’s *What Is Sex?*, which concerns the ontology of sex or the sexual, a perhaps very special kind of intersubjectivity. In all, students will gain appreciation for some of the most important concepts and movements in post-1950 continental thought, including Levinasian ethics, Deleuzian/Guattarian schizoanalysis, Derridean deconstruction, and the philosophical application of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Students will, moreover, gain a deeper understanding of and appreciation for the dynamics of the relation between the other and the same.

Philosophy 480 Satisfies the Capstone Experience and Writing requirement Pre-Requisite: 12 hrs in philosophy, 6 hrs of PHIL 300 or higher
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**PHIL 480**                      **Capstone Seminar**                      **3 hr**  
**Ariane Nomikos**

From the clothes we wear, to the foods we eat, to the way we decorate our homes and the routine activities we undertake, our everyday lives are brimming with aesthetic character. Yet, much of contemporary philosophical aesthetics within the Western tradition (particularly within twentieth-century Anglo-American aesthetics) has focused on the (fine) arts and the special aesthetic experiences encounters with them can afford. As a result, the everyday dimension of our aesthetic lives has been largely neglected within aesthetics discourse. This perceived neglect, as well as the emphasis placed on everyday aesthetic considerations within non-Western cultural traditions, motivates much of the recent inquiry into the aesthetic domain of everyday life. This course will introduce students to the newly-emerging field of ‘everyday aesthetics’ and explore the role of aesthetics in life, death, and everything in between.

# Religious Studies Courses

Religious Studies 102 satisfies area 7 of the GEF
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**RELG 102 Introduction to World Religions 3 hr**  
**Alyssa Beall**

This online, accelerated course is both an introduction to World Religions and a introduction to the academic study of those religions. We will explore the history and development of religions around the world, and examine how those traditions are practiced today in a variety of contexts.

**RELG 102 Introduction to World Religions 3 hr**  
**Joseph Snow**

This course is an introduction to the comparative study of world religions. We hope to explore the ways that religious traditions construct worlds of meaning, analyze the human situation, and speak of power and mystery. We shall address the multi-religious contexts in which Americans and many other people live today in the 21st century; and consider how people with different religious beliefs and practices can cultivate respect for, and dialogue with, diverse traditions of others. Such inquiries can sometimes be disorienting, for the sense of religion many of us might feel in the United States has been mediated largely through the monotheistic histories contained within Judaism, Islam, and Christianity. Traditions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, Sikhism, and Jainism, as well as Indigenous religions and New Religious Movements, may have very different sets of assumptions, notwithstanding a multiplicity of divinities, an absence or abundance of scriptural authority, as well as historically and contextually specific ritual practices. With the more recent spread of religious pluralism and the movement toward inter-faith dialogue, many of these traditions will seem very much like an "other" way of being in the world. In order to learn about these other religions in a reflective way, we'll attempt to keep two important perspectives in mind: *Imaginative Sympathy*—Please take seriously the worlds of peoples involved, assume that religious thoughts and/or practices carry real meaning for any person or group under consideration; and *Critical Distance*—Try to raise questions that may not be raised by the participants, such as, what effect does this faith/practice have on the participant? On society? What kinds of values does a given text suggest or implicitly depend upon? What are the conceptions of human nature that texts and practices envision? What does a given dimension of any tradition show to be fundamental to human happiness and welfare?

**RELG 102**  
**(Online)**  
**Aaron Gale**

**Introduction to World Religions**

**3 hr**

This course introduces students to five of the most widely recognized religions in the world today: Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Despite some commonalities, each religion is unique regarding its history and practice. Therefore, the goals of this course are primarily twofold: 1. to provide students with an understanding of how each religion evolved historically and spiritually, and 2. to explore the contemporary practice of each religion. In addition, we will study some of the interactions that have taken place among the religions.

Religious Studies 219 satisfies area 5 of the GEF

**RELG 219**  
**Aaron Gale**

**The History of Christianity**

**3 hr**

This course explores the birth and evolution of Christian thought from its inception until approximately the modern era. The emphasis of this course is therefore on the significant events and people that helped to shape Christianity. Some of the individuals we will discuss include Jesus of Nazareth, St. Paul, St. Augustine, and St. Thomas Aquinas. In addition, other topics related to the study of Christian thought will be examined. Examples of such topics include the early relationship between Judaism and Christianity, monasticism, and the Crusades. Ultimately, then, this course will: 1. explore how Christianity developed within the confines of the ancient world, and 2. provide students with the knowledge necessary to identify and explain key Christian events and people integral to the religion's growth.

Religious Studies 231 satisfies area 7 of the GEF

**RELG 231**  
**Joseph Snow**

**Religions of China and Japan**

**3 hr**

We begin our study of China and Japan with a brief introduction and review of the history, texts, and practices encompassing East Asian spirituality in general, covering some 3,500 years and including many of the major traditions – Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. We will explore a great variety of topics, including: the life of the Buddha; *karma* and rebirth; inspiring teachers; the life of Confucius; sacred Taoist texts; holy landscapes, shrines and festivals; enlightenment; and—for all the faiths—the spiritual and ethical teachings, art and architecture, sacred writings, ritual and ceremony, and death and the afterlife. We will also examine the rise of new religious movements in the East, the spread of religious pluralism, and the movement toward interfaith dialogue at the beginning of the new millennium. We will engage the conceptual structure underlying Confucian social and Taoist philosophical reflections, suggesting that examinations of Chinese and Japanese cosmology provide alternative definitions of religion that could be used to address some of the pressing issues of the Western cultural tradition.

With the growing popularity of traditions like Zen in the West, we shall consider how *koans* – riddles such as “What is the sound of one hand clapping?” – are embedded in larger narratives that belong to ancient traditions of “encounter dialogues.” These dialogues feature dramatic contests between masters, disciples, and an array of natural and supernatural forces: rogue priests, “wild foxes,” hermits, wizards, shape-shifters, magical animals, and dangerous women. Lastly, we will enter into the realm of nature as it

has been experienced by the Japanese. Central to this experience is the felt presence of *kami* — the “spirits” that invest every tree, rock, flower, mountain, river, and other natural object. This course pivots precariously on one paradoxical experience/expression: the experience which we might embody by looking closely, in wonder, at the intricacy of the petals of a flower, or contemplating the spreading shadow of a tree, or feeling the awesome majesty of a mountain waterfall!

Religious Studies 301 satisfies area 7 of the GEF
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**RELG 301**

**Studies in Asian Scriptures**

**3 hr**

**Joseph Snow**

We begin our scriptural study with an extensive introduction and review of the history, texts, and practices encompassing Asian spirituality in general, covering some 3,500 years and including many of the major traditions – Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Islam, Sikhism, Baha’i, Taoism, Confucianism, and Shinto. We will explore a great variety of topics, including: the life of the Buddha; *karma* and rebirth; inspiring teachers and *gurus*; the life of Confucius; sacred Taoist texts; the epics of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*; holy landscapes, shrines and festivals; enlightenment; and—for all the faiths—the spiritual and ethical teachings, art and architecture, sacred writings, ritual and ceremony, and death and the afterlife. We will also examine the rise of new religious movements in the East, the spread of religious pluralism, and the movement toward interfaith dialogue at the beginning of the new millennium.

Textually speaking, we even attempt to show the unique manner in which these traditions became a core component of ethnic identity; and, we’ll critically discuss the tensions that arose from competing lines of transmission and interpretation in the myths and doctrines of the ancient schools of Tantra. We will engage the conceptual structure underlying Confucian social and Taoist philosophical reflections, suggesting that an examination of Chinese cosmology provides alternative definitions of religion that could be used to address some of the pressing issues of the Western cultural tradition.

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Religious Studies 304 satisfies area 5 of the GEF
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**RELG 304**

**Studies in Hebrew Scriptures**

**3 hr**

**Alyssa Beall**

This course examines the Hebrew Bible (Tanakh) using a variety of scholarly methodologies, including the historical-critical method, source criticism, and literary theory. While exploring how the text reached its current form, we will be comparing and contrasting it with other texts from the Ancient Near East and discussing questions of politics, ritual, and mythology.

**RELG 330****Religion and Music****3 hr****Joseph Snow**

The myth of Orpheus articulates what social theorists have known since Plato: music matters. It is uniquely able to move us, to guide the imagination, to evoke memories, and to create spaces within which meaning is made. This class will explore religion through music -- a source of spiritual elation, social cohesion, and empowerment in cultures around the world. The only art form named after a divinity; music has been documented from prehistory to the present age in virtually all known cultures. For many, music is a vehicle for spiritual growth and community empowerment, whether it's understood as a gift of the gods or simply a practice for achieving mental states conducive to enlightenment. Traditionally, when religious scholars talk about music, it's as a kind of aesthetic supplement to the important spiritual content of a religion, analogous to stained-glass windows or temple paintings. In contrast, this class will acknowledge the critical role of musical activity in religious life. Music is not incidental in religious practice but a sacred treasure that is central to the growth and sustenance of religions throughout the world. Musical sound is sacred in most religions because it embodies the divine and can be shared by all participants. It endures among diverse communities of people despite theological differences. We will specifically apply such ideas, theories, and methods to the diverse contours and contexts of post-1960s popular music; the relatively new 'keywords' within the growing academic field of "sound studies" (e.g., noise, acoustics, music, and silence); and the ways sacred music effects cultural, political, and religious transitions in the contemporary world.

**RELG 364****Gods and Monsters****3 hr****Alyssa Beall**

Throughout religious history, the ideas of the sacred or divine have often been paired with questions of evil and terror. This course examines the ways good and evil - or "gods and monsters" - have been considered, addressed, and adapted to specific cultural contexts. We will look at a diverse range of religious and cultural expressions of the monstrous - including ghosts, demons, zombies, and vampires - to explore what these creatures say about societal hopes and fears. This course will be a combination of discussion and lecture, with an emphasis on critical, academic understanding of the texts, religious traditions, and ethical issues. Lectures are intended to explain the basic concepts required for a fuller understanding of the texts, while small and large group discussions will provide greater depth and room for questioning of concepts.

# Humanities Courses

Humanities 101 satisfies area 6 of the GEF

**HUM 101 Introduction to Western Civilization 1 3 hr**  
**Montana Williamson**

In this course we will examine civilizations across the Western world and their interactions with each other and others from the age of Mesopotamia to the Renaissance. As we read about and discuss these civilizations, we will consider their trends and shifts over time and how those changes impact social organization, culture, traditions, social value, religions, art, philosophy, and political institutions.

Humanities 102 satisfies area 6 of the GEF

**HUM 102 Introduction to Western Civilization 2 3 hr**  
**Ametasree Bhattacharya**

This course is an interdisciplinary, historical survey of western culture from the Renaissance to the present. Students will gain an understanding of this period by investigating and critically reflecting on the art, architecture, philosophy, religion, literature, politics, science, and music of this period.

Humanities 112 satisfies area 5 of the GEF

**HUM 112 Humanities of Greece 3 hr**  
**Alyssa Beall**

In this course we will explore the cultural history of Greece's art, literature, architecture, religion, and philosophy, from prehistory to the Hellenistic period. Our two primary goals will be to understand the development and connections between periods of history, and to understand how and why aspects of Greek society influenced, and were affected by, other cultures.

Humanities 323 satisfies area 5 of the GEF

**HUM 112 Greek and Roman Myths 3 hr**  
**Aaron Gale**

introduces students to some of the most widely recognized Greek and Roman myths and characters from the Classical Period, including relating to Achilles, Odysseus, and Zeus. Upon successful completion of this course students will be able to: 1. Identify some of the major literary characters associated with ancient Greece and Rome, 2. Understand and explain the meaning of ancient Greek and Roman myths, and 3. Trace the impact and influence that ancient Greek and Roman cultures/myths had upon other cultures of the ancient world.