

DEPARTMENT OF RELIGION

Fahy Hall, Room 322

(973) 761-9480

[shu.edu/academics/ba-religion](https://www.shu.edu/academics/ba-religion) (<https://www.shu.edu/academics/ba-religion.html>)

Religion Faculty: Aburaya; Anderson, Conway (*Department Chair*); Maloney; Murzaku (*Director of Catholic Studies Program*); Savastano; Sciglitano (*Executive Director of the Sister Rose Thering Fund for Education in Jewish-Christian Studies*); Takacs

Jewish-Christian Studies Faculty: Brill (*Cooperman/Ross Endowed Chair of Jewish-Christian Studies, Director of Graduate Studies*); Frizzell (*Director, Institute of Judaean-Christian Studies*); Sciglitano (*Interim Executive Director of the Sister Rose Thering Fund for Education in Jewish-Christian Studies*); Slutsky (*Oesterreicher Visiting Assistant Professor of Jewish-Christian Studies*)

Retired and Emeriti Faculty: Ahr; Bossman; Carter, Liddy; Pire; Webb

As a vital part of the Catholic mission of Seton Hall University, the Department of Religion offers programs of study leading to the Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Master of Arts in Jewish-Christian Studies. Based on a broad liberal education, the department introduces students to the academic study of religion and theology. In order to give students an understanding of religious beliefs and practices in their various manifestations, the department applies a range of methodologies including philosophy of religion, sociology of religion, phenomenology, and history of religions. Courses focus on theological, intellectual, and moral traditions of Christianity and other major religions of the world. Because religion plays such an important role in the global community, we approach specific traditions such as Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism from a comparative perspective and with an emphasis on ecumenism and inter-religious and theological understanding. Faculty and students investigate the religious quest as it relates to other areas of life, particularly human relationships, issues of race, class, and gender, the impact of religion on social and economic and political institutions, and the arts.

A bachelor's degree in religion provides an excellent foundation for graduate school. Opportunities for continued studies include master's and doctoral degree programs in religion and theology and graduate programs in religious education and seminary studies. Since religion graduates have a broad training in human culture, they are also in demand in many professional fields, including law, conflict resolution, education, social work and various types of ministry.

Theta Alpha Kappa (TAK), The National Honor Society for Theology and Religious Studies

Local Chapter, Alpha Omicron

Students with a 3.0 GPA and 3.5 in religion who have earned 12 credits in religion are encouraged to apply for membership.

Major

- Religion Major (B.A.) (<http://catalogue.shu.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/department-religion/religion-major-ba/>)

Accelerated and Dual Degree

- 3+3 Religion Major B.A./J.D. (<http://catalogue.shu.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/department-religion/33-religion-major-ba-jd/>)
- Religion B.A./Master of Public Administration (<http://catalogue.shu.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/department-religion/religion-ba-master-public-administration/>)

Minor

- Religion Minor (<http://catalogue.shu.edu/undergraduate/college-arts-sciences/department-religion/religion-minor/>)

Note to Students: The following listing represents those courses that are in the active rotation for each department, i.e., have been offered in the past five years. Some departments have additional courses offered more rarely but still available – to find the complete list of all official courses for a department, please use the “Course Catalogue Search” function in Self-Service Banner.

Course Descriptions

RELS 1010 Religious Dimension of Life (3 Credits)

Analyzes the philosophical, psychological and theological foundations of human faith and religious belief. Considers the attitude and practices that characterize humanity as religious.

RELS 1102 Intro to Bible (3 Credits)

Formation of the Bible. Its literary, archaeological, historical and theological dimensions. The religious communities of biblical times; their world views, beliefs and religious commitments.

RELS 1103 Intro Old Test.-Hebrew Bible (3 Credits)

This course introduces students to the academic study of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament. Focus on the literary, historical, cultural, and religious contexts from which the Hebrew Bible emerged. Examines the place of the Hebrew Bible in Jewish and Christian traditions and its relevance within contemporary global culture.

RELS 1104 Intro to the New Testament (3 Credits)

This course introduces students to the academic study of the New Testament. Focus on the literary, historical, cultural, and religious contexts from which the New Testament emerged

RELS 1202 Christian Belief-Thought (3 Credits)

Introduction to significant doctrines and an exploration of Christian theology in a historical context. Emphasis on the development of Christian faith and theology.

RELS 1302 Intro to Catholic Theology (3 Credits)

Approaches to revelation and theology, the reality of God and the triune nature of God; cosmology; and the problem of evil, the Church and the sacraments in the teaching of Vatican II. Traditional and nontraditional eschatology.

RELS 1402 Religions of the World (3 Credits)

Basic issues in major faith traditions of the world. Special emphasis on the religious experience as expressed in sacred literature and specific worldviews and mythologies. Considers traditional rituals and symbols, as well as nontraditional forms used to express a response to the sacred.

RELS 1403 History of Asian Relig Reflect (3 Credits)

Origin and development of religious speculations in India from the Vedic period to Shankara; in China from Confucius to Chu Hsi; in Japan from the Nara to the Meiji periods. (Formerly ASIA 3101).

RELS 1502 Contemporary Moral Issues (3 Credits)

Explores personal and communal moral experience in the light of faith, and the relationship between human values and Christian belief. Examines methods of moral decision-making and the norms that guide human behavior.

RELS 1503 Christian Ethics (3 Credits)

Systematic study of the distinctive contribution of Christianity to ethical norms. Comparisons of various theories and moral systems with each other and with the ethical systems of non-Christian traditions.

RELS 1504 Faith and Justice (3 Credits)

This course assesses various leading, historical and contemporary theories of justice and considers their implications for the life of religious faith. This course considers two, interrelated sets of questions. First, what is the nature of justice, and what kind of political, economic, and social practices do various theories of justice recommend? Second, what might justice mean from the perspective of religious faith, and does the life of faith necessarily require the pursuit of justice in the world? In considering these questions, this course pays particular attention to the challenges of globalization and poverty and the question of human rights. Special emphasis placed on Catholic and non-Catholic Christian moral traditions, with some engagement in non-Christian religions.

RELS 1505 Catholicism/Race & Soc Justice (3 Credits)**RELS 2010 Method in Study of Rel-Theo (3 Credits)**

Primarily for religion majors and minors. Methodologies used in academic study of religion and theology. Emphasizes major figures and theories in each of the various approaches. Prerequisites: three courses at the introductory level.

RELS 2221 Early Christian Thought (3 Credits)**RELS 2222 Medieval Christian Thought (3 Credits)****RELS 2223 Modern Christian Thought (3 Credits)**

This course examines the development of Christian thought from the Reformation to modern times. Topics include: Early attempts at Church reform; the Protestant reformation in Germany, Switzerland and England; the Council of Trent and the Catholic Reformation; the Orthodox Churches; the Peace of Westphalia and the religious settlement; the challenge of rationalism and the Christian response in modern times. We will explore the relation of free will and grace, clashes between religion and politics on a variety of fronts, including the Peasant Revolt and the French Revolution, the rise of nationalism, and Enlightenment and Romantic views of religion. The course will be grounded in close examination of theological texts, but will also include works of art, poetry, historical accounts, and film.

RELS 2224 Eastern Christianity (3 Credits)

The course will provide an in depth analysis of the historical road of Eastern Christianity from the apostolic time to our own. It will facilitate students' efforts to understand the essential dogmatic position of Eastern Orthodoxy, and the basic dogmas about Scripture, tradition, the Church, and ecclesiastical authority.

RELS 2253 Spec Ques-Justice, Faith, Film (3 Credits)**RELS 2261 The Black Church (3 Credits)**

A survey of the major institution for religious expression developed by African-Americans from its origins in slavery until the contemporary urban period. The social, economic and political role of the Black church as well as its cultural and religious functions are examined. (Formerly AFAM 2417).

RELS 2310 Intro to XN Spirituality (3 Credits)**RELS 2315 Theology of Marriage (3 Credits)**

Past and present Christian understandings of the marital relationship in light of Scripture and sacramental theology. Insights about marriage based on knowledge from psychology and anthropology. Christian marriage as promise, symbol and vocation.

RELS 2316 Theology of Death (3 Credits)

Consideration of death and dying, particularly from a Christian perspective. Death as a part of life; death as something in itself; death as a beginning.

RELS 2411 Jewish Beliefs and Practices (3 Credits)

Survey of the beliefs and observances of Judaism designed particularly for the Christian student. Jewish religious texts, the Sabbath and festivals, the family's role within Judaism, dietary laws, prayer and contemporary religious movements within Judaism. Prerequisite: CORE 1101.

RELS 2415 Intro to Islam (3 Credits)

Introduction to basic elements of the Islamic tradition: the Koran, Prophet Muhammad, beliefs, rituals, mysticism, the arts, social and political history. Prerequisite: CORE 1101.

RELS 2416 Islamic Spirit-Mysticism (3 Credits)

Islamic culture and religion explored through the lens of the development of Muslim forms of spirituality, including the dimension known as Sufism or Islamic mysticism. Major doctrines and practices associated with Muslim spirituality in its varied cultural forms - philosophical treatises, poetry, prose, rituals, prayer and the arts.

RELS 2418 Buddhist World Thought-Culture (3 Credits)

This course is intended as an introduction to Buddhist traditions in South and Southeast Asia, East Asia, and the West. Progressing both chronologically and thematically, the course begins with the earliest known strata of Buddhist ideas created in India some 2500 years ago. After an introduction to basic Buddhist doctrines and practices, students study the spread of Buddhism southward to Sri Lanka and Thailand and northward to Tibet, China, Japan, and Korea. The course will culminate in a brief overview of Buddhist practices in America. Prerequisite: CORE 1101.

RELS 2419 African Religions (3 Credits)

Explores the complex nature of the African system of thought concerning God, man, animate and inanimate things, and the meaning of religious experience in African society. The effect of Christianity and Islam on African religious thought. (Formerly AFAM 2415).

RELS 2420 ST - Comm Abrahamic Religions (3 Credits)

Counted together, adherents of the major Abrahamic religious traditions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam comprise more than half of the global population. This course explores the similarities among and differences between Abrahamic faiths by studying divine-human and human-human communication patterns within their most sacred texts.

RELS 2511 Christian Values-Health Issues (3 Credits)

Overview of some of the more significant issues in medicine, biological research and healthcare confronting society, including genetic engineering, behavior modification, abortion, human experimentation, allocation of healthcare resources. Special emphasis on the Catholic moral traditions, with some examination of other Christian, Jewish and secular moralists.

RELS 2513 War, Peace-Theological Ethics (3 Credits)

This course examines the ethical dimensions of war and peace as presented in the Christian theological and moral traditions. The following areas will be examined: biblical reflections on love and violence, the formation of just war theory in the early Church and its maturation in medieval and post-medieval theology and moral and legal philosophy; the tradition of non-traditional violence and pacifism, and modern Catholic social teaching and contemporary Protestant and philosophical-secular formulations on the use of force. Major thinkers in theological ethics such as Augustine, Aquinas, Reinhold Niebuhr, and John Courtney Murray, SJ, will be considered as well as the writings of influential contemporary thinkers such as Lisa Sowle Cahill, George Weigel, Fr. Bryan Hehir, Paul Ramsey, and John Howard Yoder.

RELS 2520 Catholic Social Teaching (3 Credits)

Emphasizing the Catholic social encyclical tradition, the course investigates the theoretical and practical relationships between Christian belief and thought, and social and economic life (involving issues of economic justice, peace, race, gender, family, etc.). In so doing, we explore the lives of those who have worked to shape Christian social justice movements, and other concrete contemporary applications of Catholic social teaching.

RELS 2551 Eastern Mysticism (3 Credits)

Compares the Western model of "spiritual journey," the intuitive approach of the Upanishads, the devotional orientation of the Bhagavad-Gita, and the Yogic path of spiritual transformation. The early Buddhist notion of "nirvana" and subsequent Zen emphases. The Chinese search for "Tao" and "li."

RELS 3102 The Bible, Film - Pop Culture (3 Credits)

The course examines the interaction of the Bible, film and popular culture by considering how stories, ideas, and themes from the Bible have been portrayed in Hollywood movies. Specific biblical texts will be analyzed in their historical context and in their depiction in popular films. The course will address such questions as: How has the Bible shaped the way the stories are told in film? How has popular culture shaped the way the Bible is read or understood? In particular, the course will focus on ideas of how religion, faith, the God/human relationship, and gender roles are shaped in the intersection of the Bible and popular culture.

RELS 3103 Gender Power Biblical Interp (3 Credits)**RELS 3180 World - From Bible to Buddha (3 Credits)**

An academic and intellectual reflection on the problem of human suffering through surveying a range of ancient religious, literary and philosophical texts that respond in different ways to human suffering

RELS 3190 Art and Arch-Ancient Near East (3 Credits)

Near Eastern religious, aesthetic, cultural and social patterns as expressed in art, sculpture, architecture and literature retrieved through archaeology from specific sites representing earliest times to the Persian and Hellenistic periods. Development of archaeology, especially in relation to museums, with practical applications of reconstruction, conservation and exhibition. Prerequisite: junior class standing.

RELS 3191 Sp Quest-Gospel John, Jews Juda (3 Credits)**RELS 3192 Sp Topics: Genesis (3 Credits)****RELS 3193 ST/Jews Gentiles Anct Judaism (3 Credits)****RELS 3194 ST:Cath Theo/Phil Benedict Tay (3 Credits)****RELS 3195 ST Jerusalem in Faith-History (3 Credits)****RELS 3196 Race& Ethnos Antiquity to Toda (3 Credits)****RELS 3199 ST Fathers of the Church (3 Credits)****RELS 3201 Catholicism and Ecumenism (3 Credits)**

This course provides a great service to dialogical or ecumenical critical thinking. The course situates the Catholic modern ecumenical movement in the larger context of Christian history, allowing students to understand the contemporary dialogues in relation to the history of doctrine. Cross-listed with Religious Studies Crosslisted with CORE 3721 Engaging the World

RELS 3202 ST-Monasticism (3 Credits)**RELS 3208 Foundation of Christian Rome (3 Credits)****RELS 3220 Religion US Mtghse-Megachurch (3 Credits)****RELS 3280 Ecumenical Movement (3 Credits)****RELS 3283 Liberation and Mercy (3 Credits)**

This course offers an introduction to liberation theologies through the lens of the theme of mercy. We will look in particular at three basic questions in light of the Christian theological tradition: 1) what is mercy? 2) What is the place of mercy with the Christian faith? 3) What must mercy look like today if Christians are to be faithful to the Christian tradition and responsive to the contemporary world? We will then look at context, origins, aims, and major texts of Catholic Latin American liberation theology in dialogue with U.S. Black liberation theology in order to evaluate the ways in which liberationist thinkers relate to earlier Christian accounts of mercy.

RELS 3284 Amer Cath Hispanic Spiritualit (3 Credits)**RELS 3285 Schism or Unity Cath-Pros Theo (3 Credits)**

This course examines the convergences and divergences between Catholic and Protestant theological and ethical perspectives on a number of fundamental themes such as faith, freedom, nature and grace, natural law, virtue, moral agency, sin, and love. In examining the writings of major theologians within both Christian traditions, this course assesses the general problems and prospects for rapprochement between Catholic and Protestant theology and ethics

RELS 3290 Christian Theo-Sci in Dialogue (3 Credits)**RELS 3298 Spcl Topic Liberation Theology (3 Credits)****RELS 3299 Spcl Top - The Meaning of Life (3 Credits)****RELS 3300 Christian Theologies Judaism (3 Credits)****RELS 3301 SpTop: Cardinal Newman (3 Credits)****RELS 3319 Sp Topics- Holy Books of India (3 Credits)****RELS 3320 ST: Mohammed and the Qur'an (3 Credits)****RELS 3321 ST: Intro to Messianism (3 Credits)****RELS 3322 ST: Interfaith Studies (3 Credits)****RELS 3323 Conversion of Rabbinic Thought (3 Credits)****RELS 3340 Womanist, Mujerista & Fem Theol (3 Credits)****RELS 3350 God Reality, Concepts, Critic (3 Credits)**

Through close reading of primary source materials, this course explores seminal works of the Western tradition on the topic of God. The course will engage the writings on God from classical Christian sources up to contemporary thinkers, both believers and those of no belief.

RELS 3391 ST Fem Theologies - Stu Relign (3 Credits)**RELS 3392 Sp Quest-Christ Chur and Cult. (3 Credits)****RELS 3394 ST Happiness is...Theo-Psyc Pr (3 Credits)****RELS 3395 ST 20 Cnt Christian Theologian (3 Credits)****RELS 3396 ST - Interiority - Life Prayer (3 Credits)**

RELS 3397 ST-Oscar Romero & Pope Francis (3 Credits)**RELS 3398 Anti-Catholicism in the Americ (3 Credits)****RELS 3399 The Life of the Soul (3 Credits)****RELS 3402 ST Phil Perspectives Holocaust (3 Credits)****RELS 3416 ST - Phi of Sexual Difference (3 Credits)****RELS 3417 ST YouTube Heresies PostMod Ap (3 Credits)****RELS 3430 Pluralism in Multireligious Am (3 Credits)**

This course discusses the limits of pluralism in an increasingly diverse, multireligious, and nonreligious America, primarily through a case studies approach. Course content will concern the intersection of these three issues: (1) the multireligious makeup of the United States (focusing on Hindu, Sikh, Islamic, Christian, and Jewish religious traditions, along with the rise of the religiously unaffiliated); (2) the myth or reality of America's "Judeo-Christian" roots; and (3) the Establishment Clause of the U.S. Constitution (so-called "separation of Church and State"). The intersection of race and religion in American history and politics will also be studied.

RELS 3431 Interfaith Studies (3 Credits)

This course will serve as an introduction to the basic concepts and issues associated with interfaith and interreligious studies. We will discuss religious diversity, methods in dialogue, questions of interfaith understanding, importance of hospitality, and appreciating the wisdom of others. We will also discuss the toll of interfaith in conflict resolution and solidarity based on case studies. We will include discussions of the role of art, prayer, theology, and social justice in fostering constructive dialogue.

RELS 3434 Women Gender and Islam (3 Credits)

We will examine the concept, role, and status of women in Islamic religion and societies, both historically and in the contemporary world, looking at both traditional and modern sources on gender and human rights.

RELS 3435 Islamic-Christian Persp Faith (3 Credits)

A comparative examination of faith and reason within the Islamic and Christian (primarily Catholic but not exclusively) theological and ethical traditions. The course focuses on how Islam and Christianity approach the nature of scriptural authority, the role of experience, history, and community in religious reflection, the prospects for a common morality (i.e., revealed knowledge versus natural knowledge), and the shape and significance of revelation and grace.

RELS 3451 Morality Through Fiction (3 Credits)**RELS 3480 Encountering Other Religions (3 Credits)****RELS 3489 ST - Modern Jewish Thinkers (3 Credits)****RELS 3490 ST-Religion and Power-S.Asia (3 Credits)****RELS 3491 Spc Qst- People of the Book (3 Credits)****RELS 3492 ST-Bible & Quran (3 Credits)****RELS 3493 ST - Antisemitism (3 Credits)****RELS 3494 ST - Islamophobia (3 Credits)****RELS 3495 SpTp Comp St Judaism-Christian (3 Credits)****RELS 3497 ST-Art & Lit Islam & Musl Cult (3 Credits)****RELS 3498 Jewish Mysticism (3 Credits)****RELS 3499 ST - Islamophobia (3 Credits)****RELS 3503 Race, Politics and Theology (3 Credits)**

This course explores questions of race, ethnicity, and political community. More specifically, is a multi-ethnic and multi-racial society viable? Alternatively, is a post-racial society more preferable? What might it mean to "recognize" and value one's ethnic or racial identity? Should one's ethnicity or race be recognized at all? If so, then how? What, then, are the political implications? Questions such as these underscore the larger question of difference and cultural pluralism: in what normative sense can difference and cultural pluralism be considered public goods—what is the limit and extent of these goods? We will pursue this question through a theological-ethical perspective that is in dialogue with contemporary issues in U.S. politics, constitutional law, and moral philosophy.

RELS 3522 Religion and Problem of Evil (3 Credits)**RELS 3523 Jewish Ethics (3 Credits)****RELS 3540 Moral Leadership: Cath Ecumen (3 Credits)****RELS 3580 ST - Religion-Violence in Asia (3 Credits)****RELS 3591 Spec Quest- Ethics (3 Credits)****RELS 3593 ST - Environmental Justice (3 Credits)****RELS 3594 ST - Environmental Theology (3 Credits)****RELS 3596 ST Phil - Theology Friendship (3 Credits)****RELS 3597 ST - Christian Ethics Business (3 Credits)****RELS 3992 Ind Study Religion-Theology (2 Credits)**

Individual study of a student-selected topic under an appropriate professor in a program approved by the department chair.

RELS 3993 Ind Study Religion-Theology (3 Credits)

Individual study of a student-selected topic under an appropriate professor in a program approved by the department chair.

RELS 3997 ST-T.Merton-Religion-Culture (3 Credits)**RELS 3998 Italy in Footsteps of Saints (3 Credits)**

Italy enjoys a pre-eminence as a spiritual center for the Christian world alongside its importance in the development of Western civilization's art, music, architecture and political thought. The course will examine the interplay between Italy's profound spiritual heritage and cultural achievements, focusing on the contributions of such key figures as the Apostles Peter and Paul, Saints Francis and Clare of Assisi, Saint Catherine of Siena and Saint Ignatius of Loyola. This course is part of Catholic Studies' foreign study tour program.

RELS 3999 Anthropology of Religion (3 Credits)